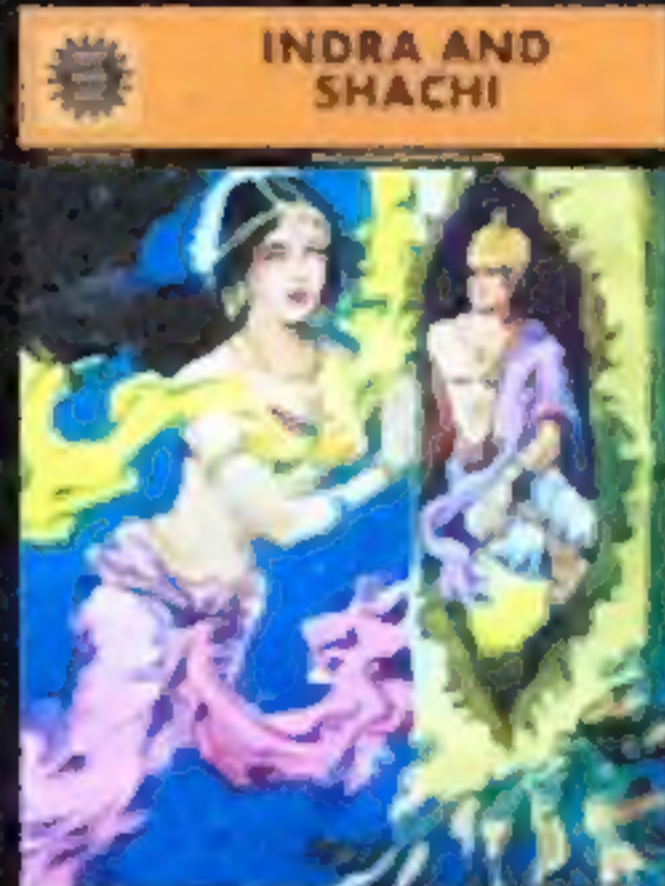


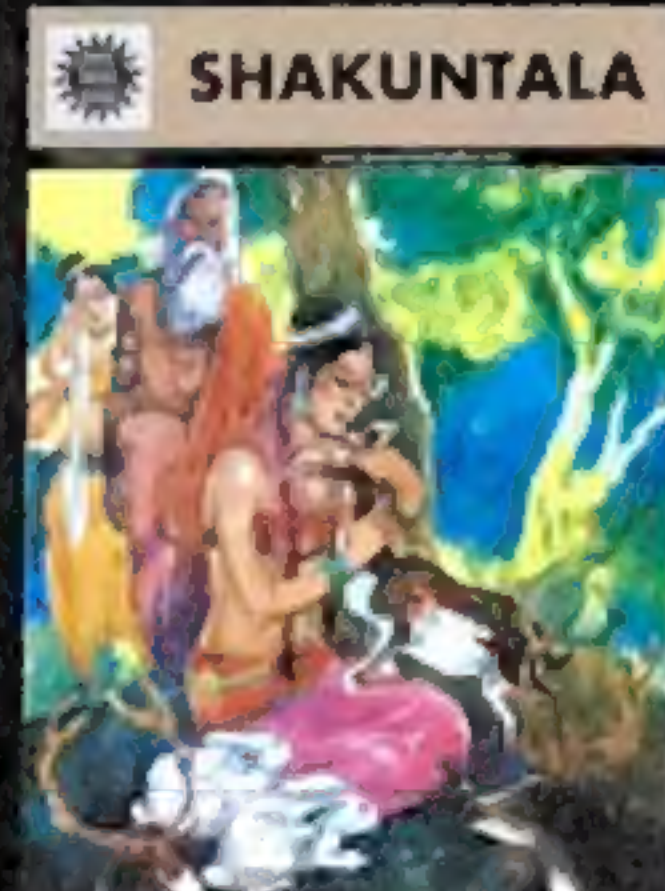
INDRA AND VRITRA

Vritra, the invincible asura, was created by Sage Twashta to avenge the death of his son, Vishwarupa, who had been killed by Indra. There was no weapon in the arsenal of the gods that could stop Vritra as he went on a rampage. Indra and the gods appealed to Lord Vishnu for help. Vishnu told them that only a weapon made from the bones of Sage Dadhichi would kill Vritra. The battle between Vritra and Indra was first told in the Rigveda. The version used here is taken from the Bhagawat Purana.

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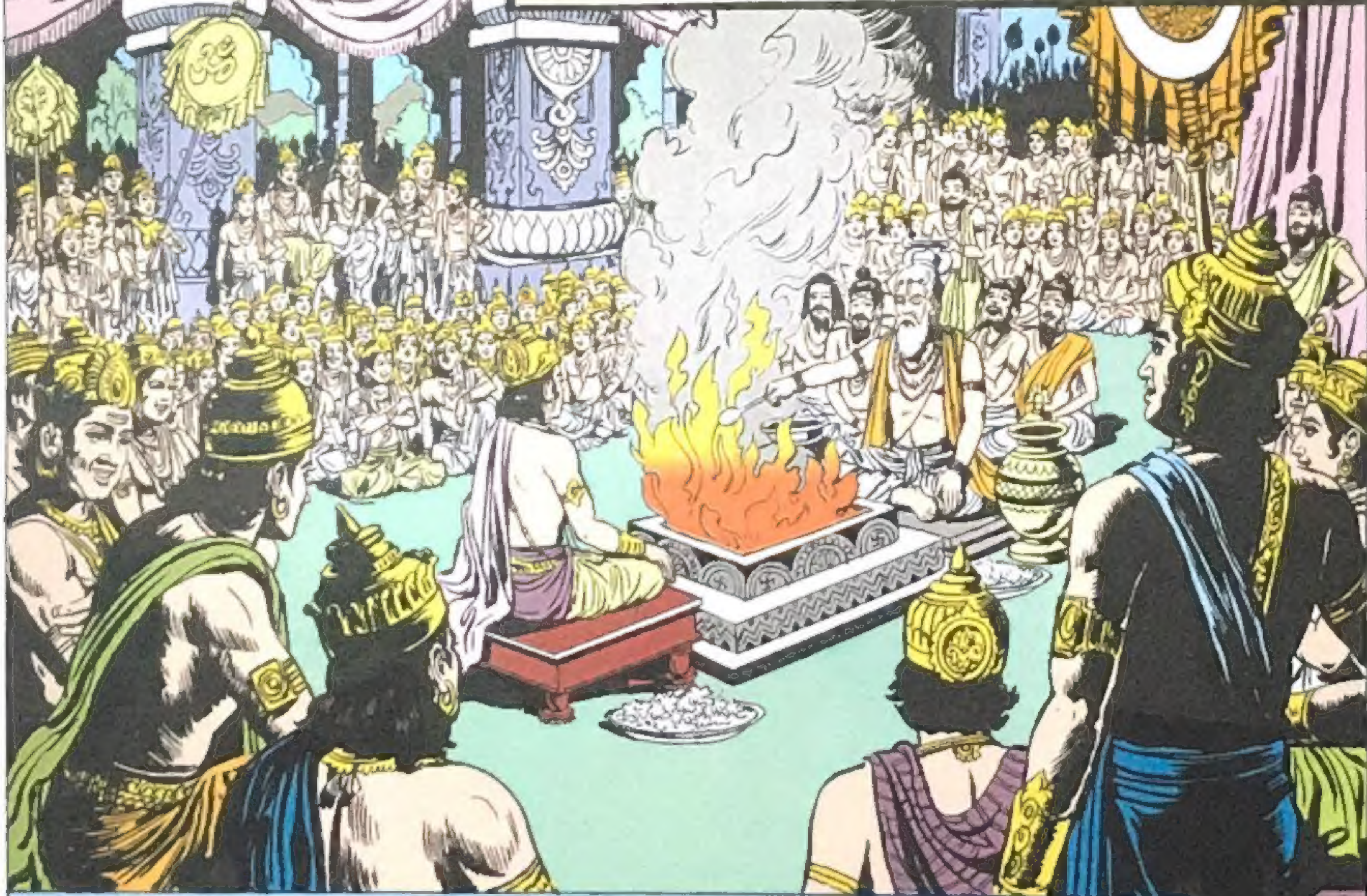


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- NARAYAN MURTHY, CHIEF MENTOR, INFOSYS

INDRA AND VRITRA



INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS, RULED HEAVEN. HIS GURU, BRIHASPATI, PERFORMED SACRIFICES WHICH GAVE THE DEVAS DIVINE GRACE ...

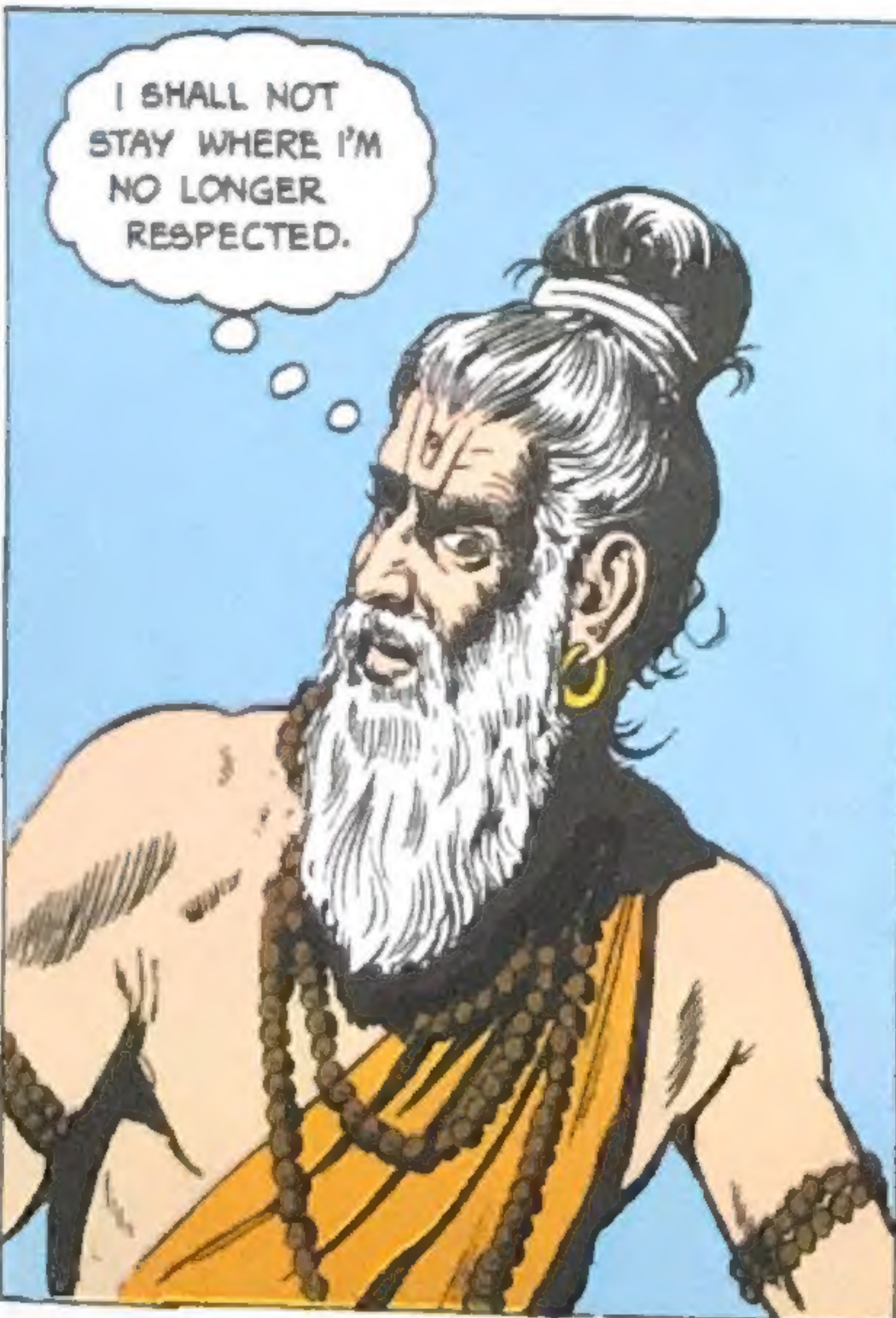
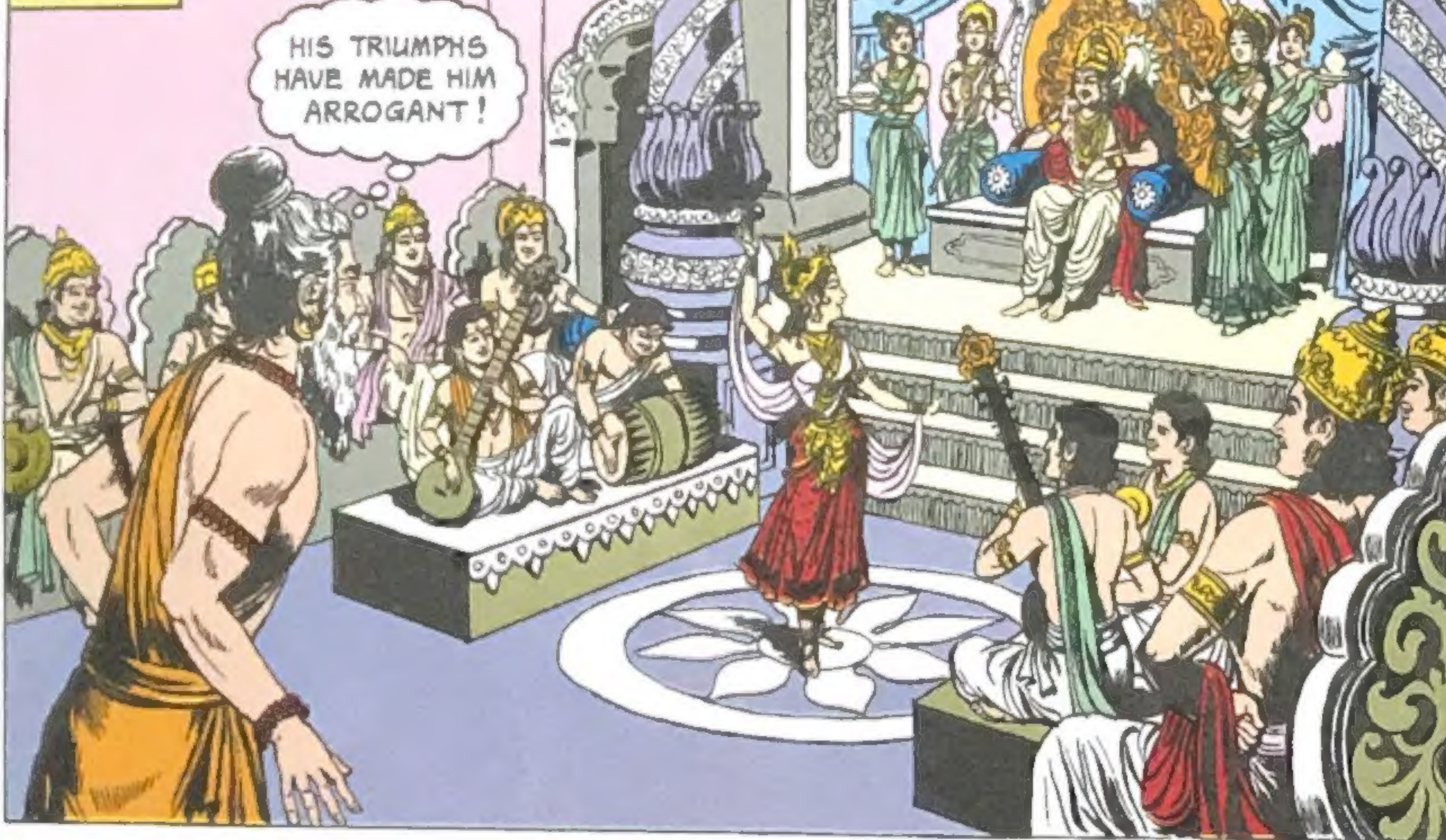
... AND INVINCIBLE VICTORY IN THEIR BATTLES WITH THEIR COUSINS, THE ASURAS



THE ASURAS WON'T TROUBLE US AGAIN.



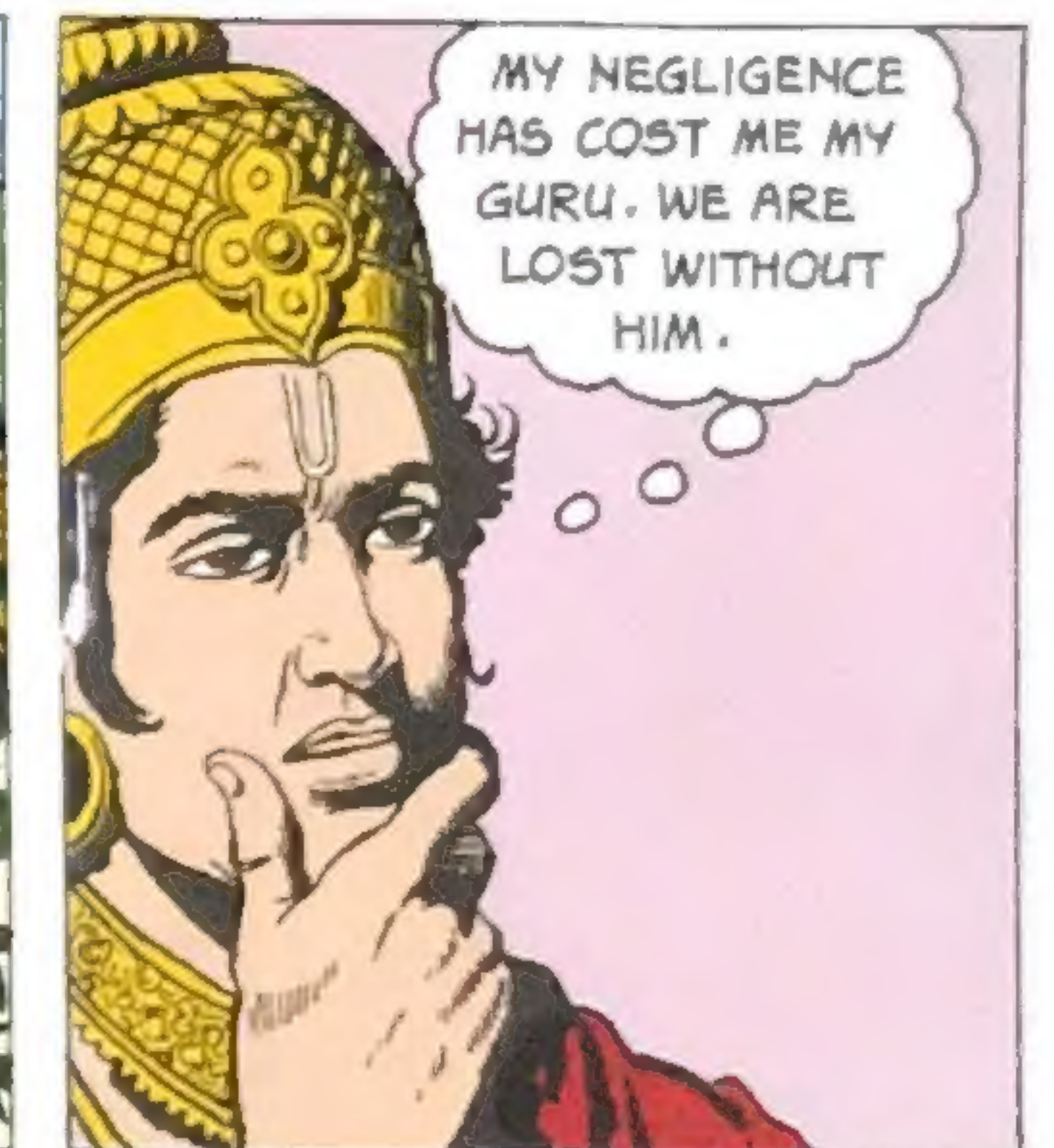
ONE DAY BRIHASPATI CAME TO SEE INDRA. ENGROSSSED IN THE DANCE AT HIS COURT, INDRA DID NOT SEE HIS GURU AND REMAINED RUDELY SEATED.



AS HE STOMPED OUT IN A RAGE, INDRA SUDDENLY NOTICED HIM.



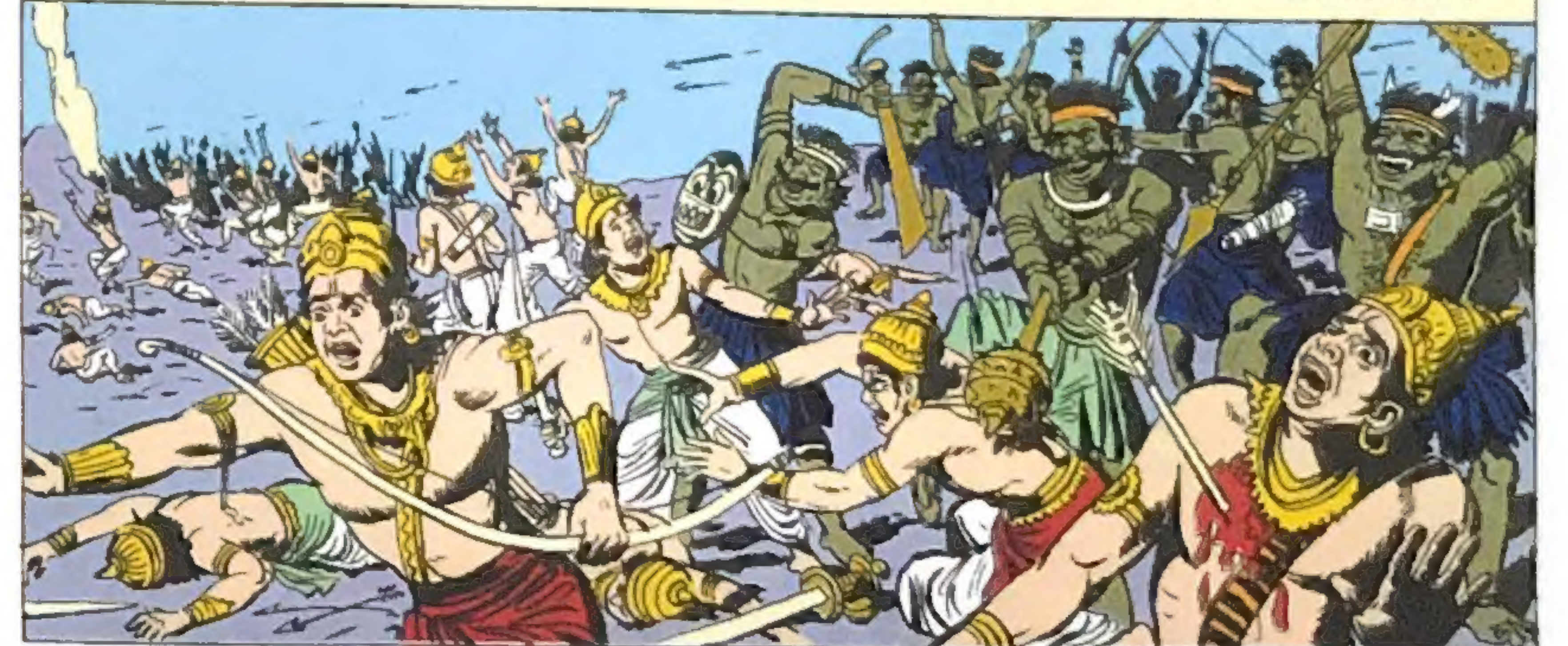
TO APPEASE THE GURU, INDRA RUSHED TO HIS HOUSE. BUT IT WAS ONE OF BRIHASPATI'S DISCIPLES WHO RECEIVED HIM.



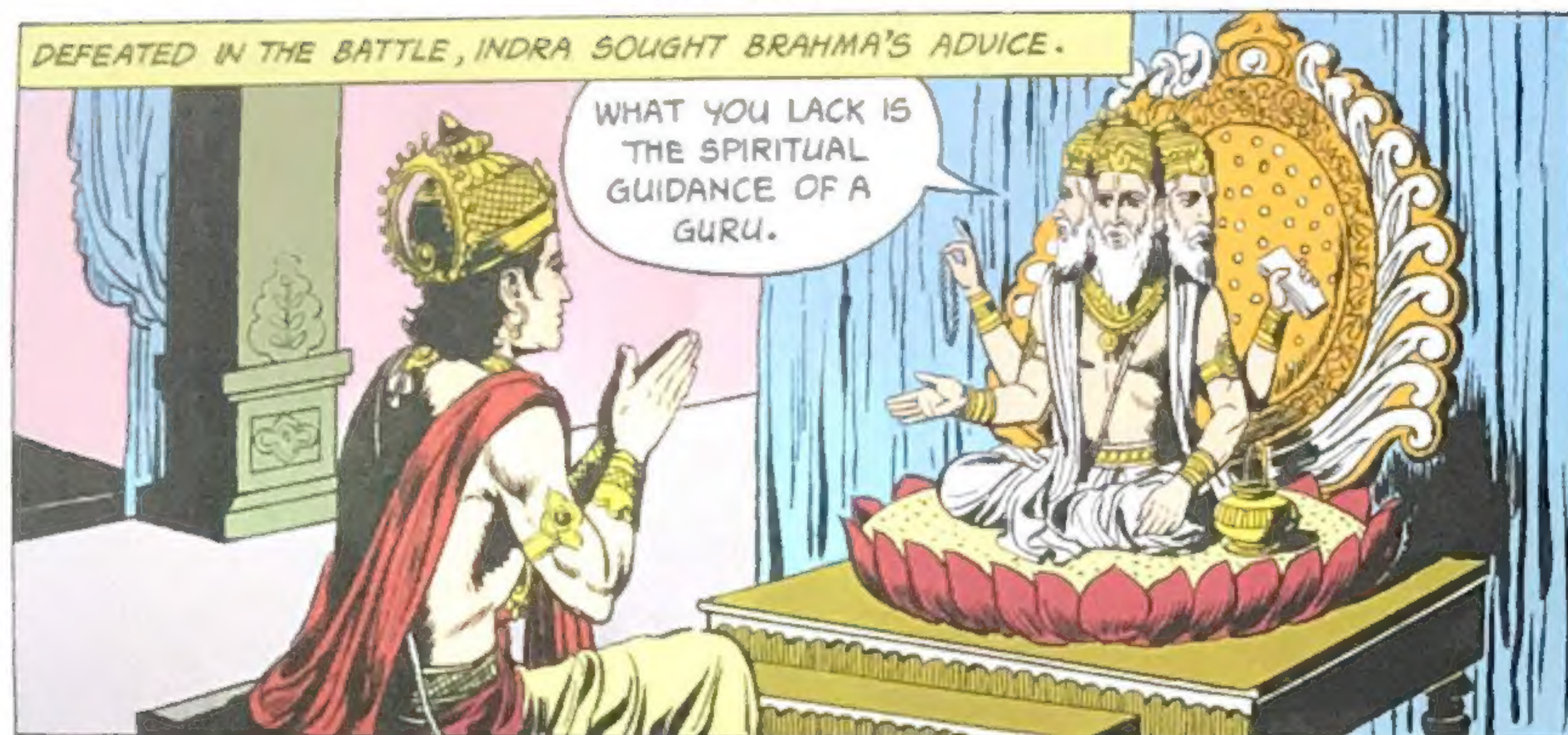
WHEN THE NEWS REACHED THEM, THE ASURAS WERE JUBILANT.



THE ASURAS INVADED HEAVEN. THIS TIME THE DEVAS COULD NOT DRIVE THEM BACK.



DEFEATED IN THE BATTLE, INDRA SOUGHT BRAHMA'S ADVICE.



WHAT YOU LACK IS THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF A GURU.



GO AND SEEK THE HELP OF VISHWARUPA, THE SON OF SAGE TWASHTA.



BUT HIS MOTHER IS RELATED TO THE ASURAS!



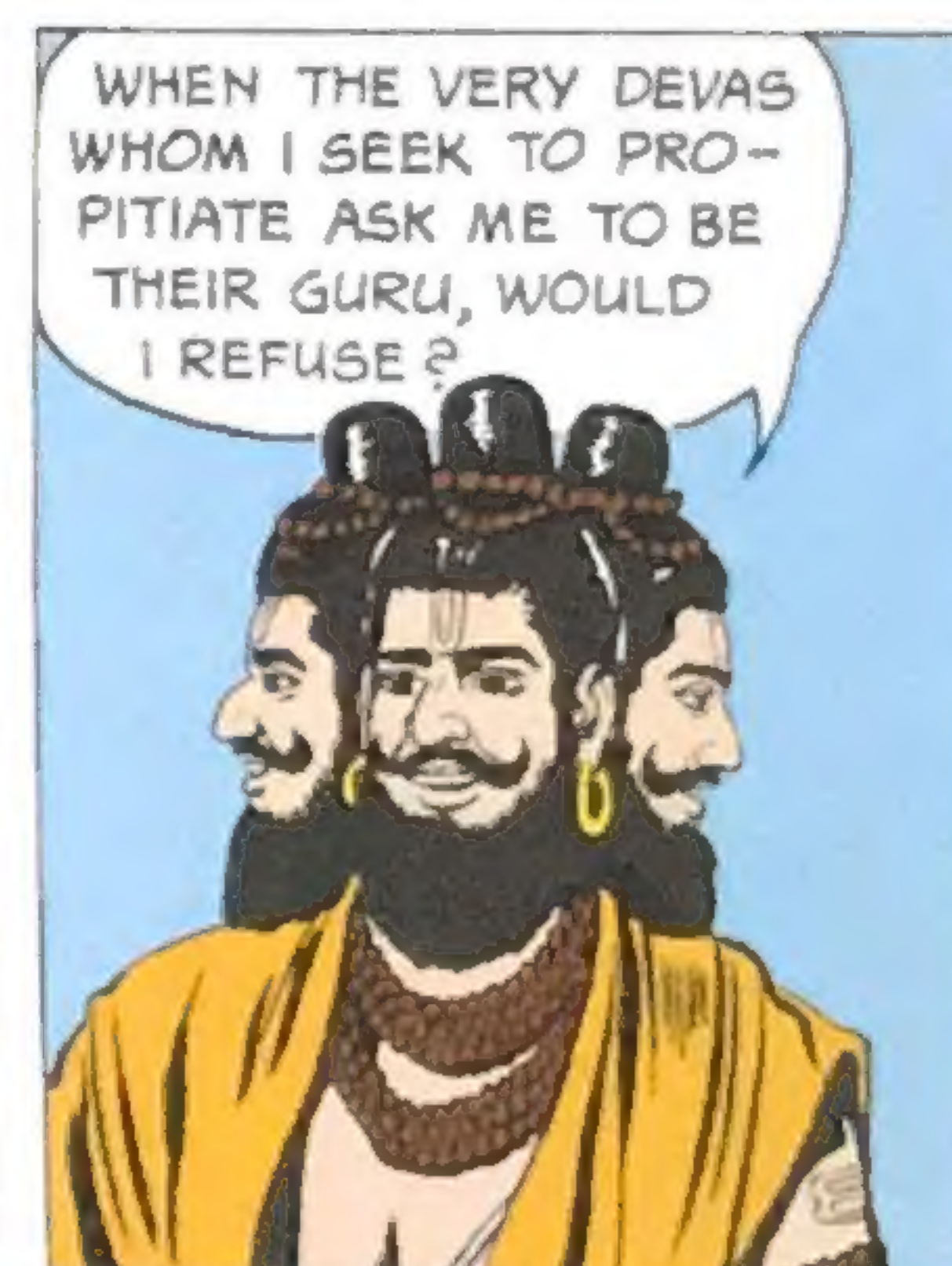
VISHWARUPA HAS SUBDUED HIS PASSIONS COMPLETELY. HE WILL BE THE IDEAL GURU.

YOU KNOW WHAT IS BEST, MY LORD. I WILL TAKE YOUR ADVICE.

INDRA CALLED ON THE THREE-HEADED VISHWARUPA.



O SON OF TWASHTA, WE BEG YOU TO BECOME OUR GURU AND PRAY FOR OUR PROSPERITY.

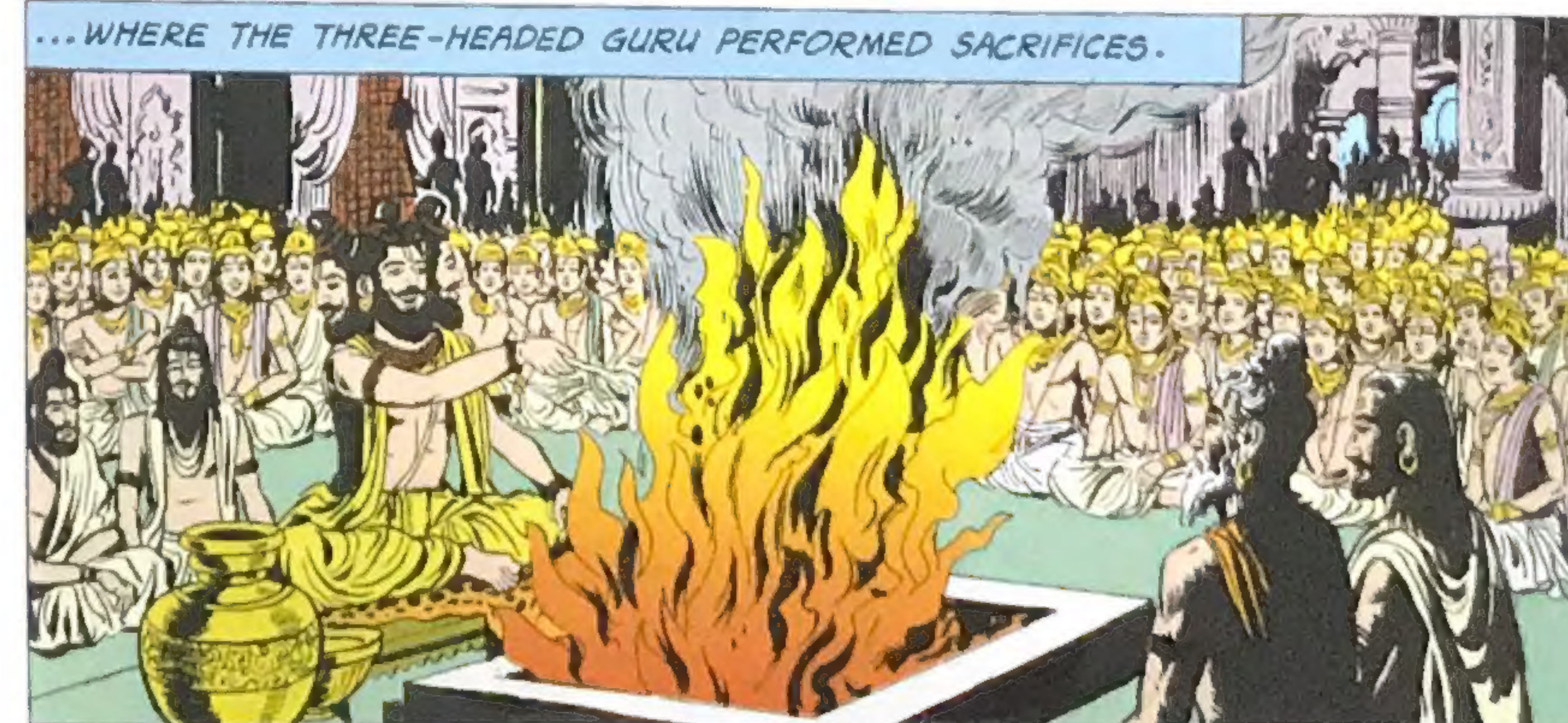


WHEN THE VERY DEVAS WHOM I SEEK TO PROPITIATE ASK ME TO BE THEIR GURU, WOULD I REFUSE?

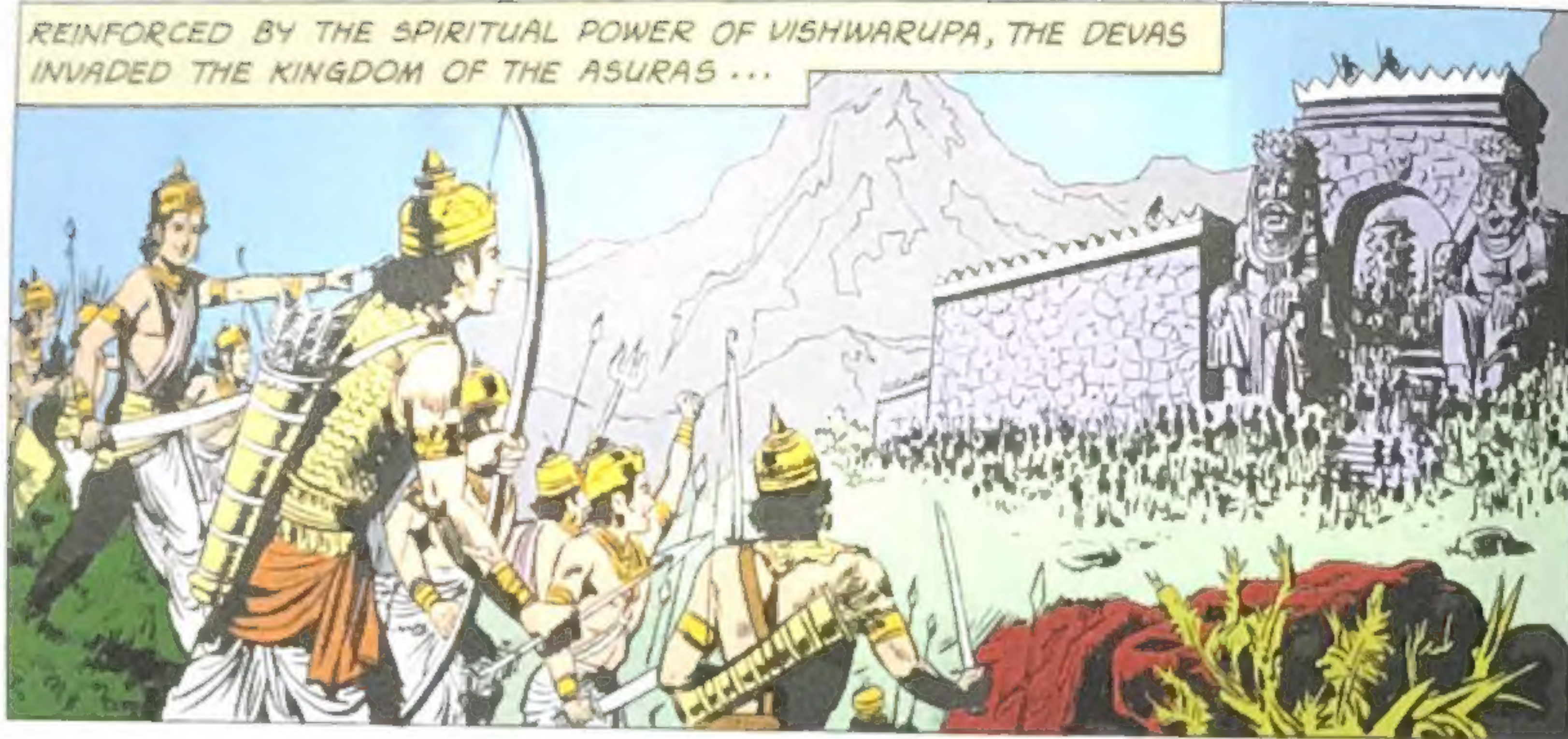
INDRA TOOK VISHWARUPA TO HEAVEN ...



...WHERE THE THREE-HEADED GURU PERFORMED SACRIFICES.



REINFORCED BY THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF VISHWARUPA, THE DEVAS INVADIED THE KINGDOM OF THE ASURAS ...



...INFLICTED A CRUSHING DEFEAT ON THEM ...

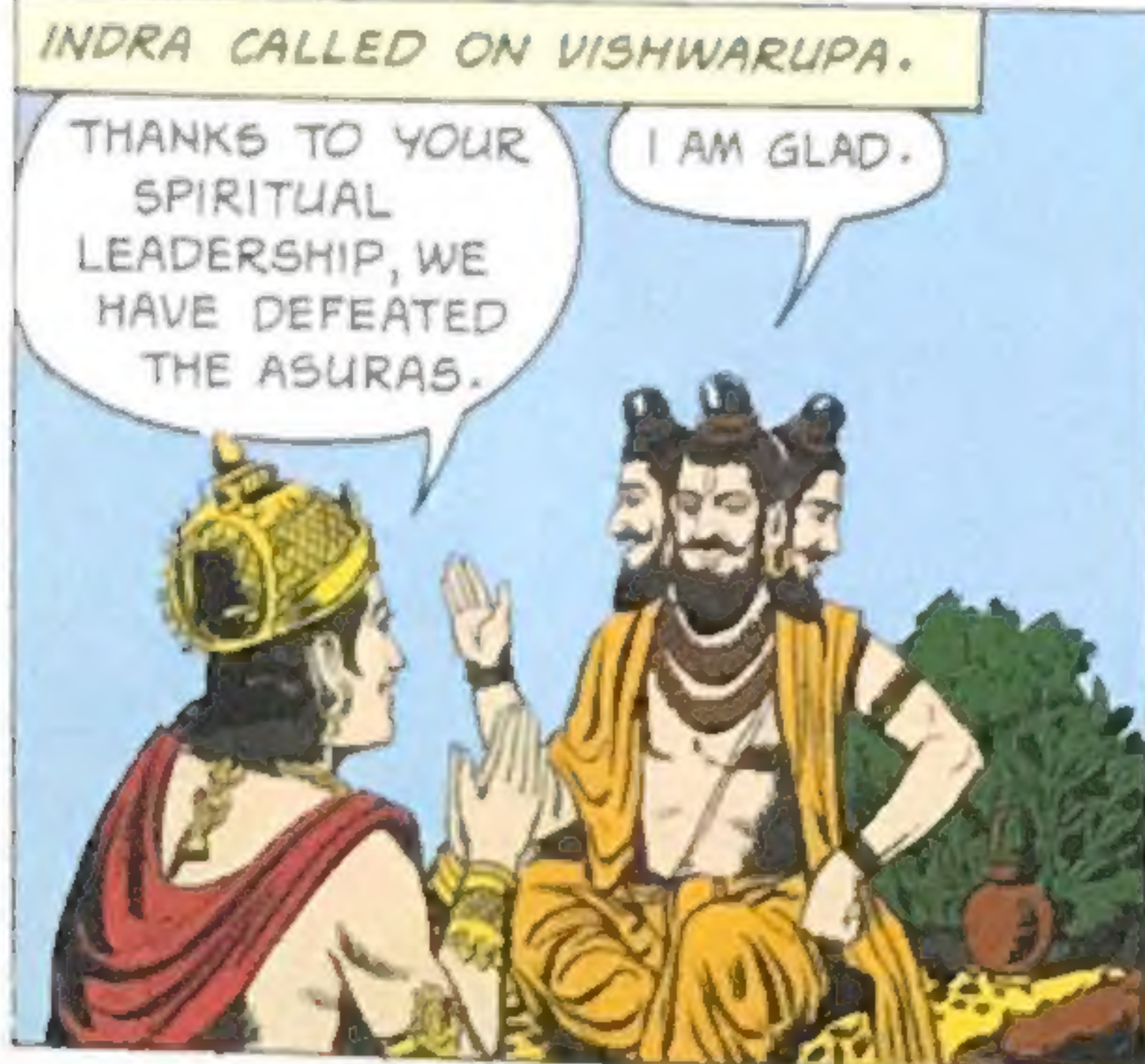


...AND RETURNED HOME IN TRIUMPH.

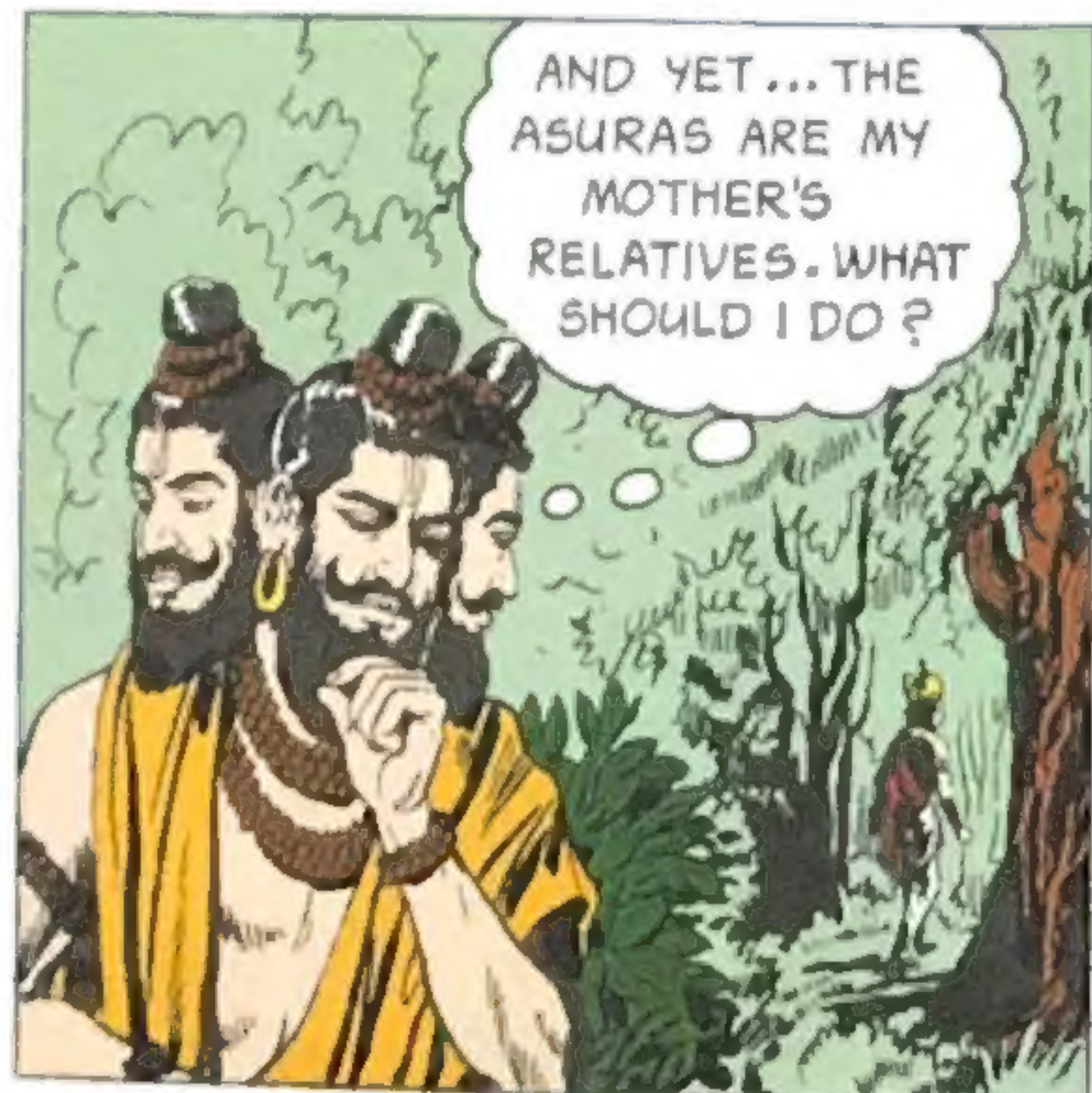
INDRA CALLED ON VISHWARUPA.

THANKS TO YOUR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP, WE HAVE DEFEATED THE ASURAS.

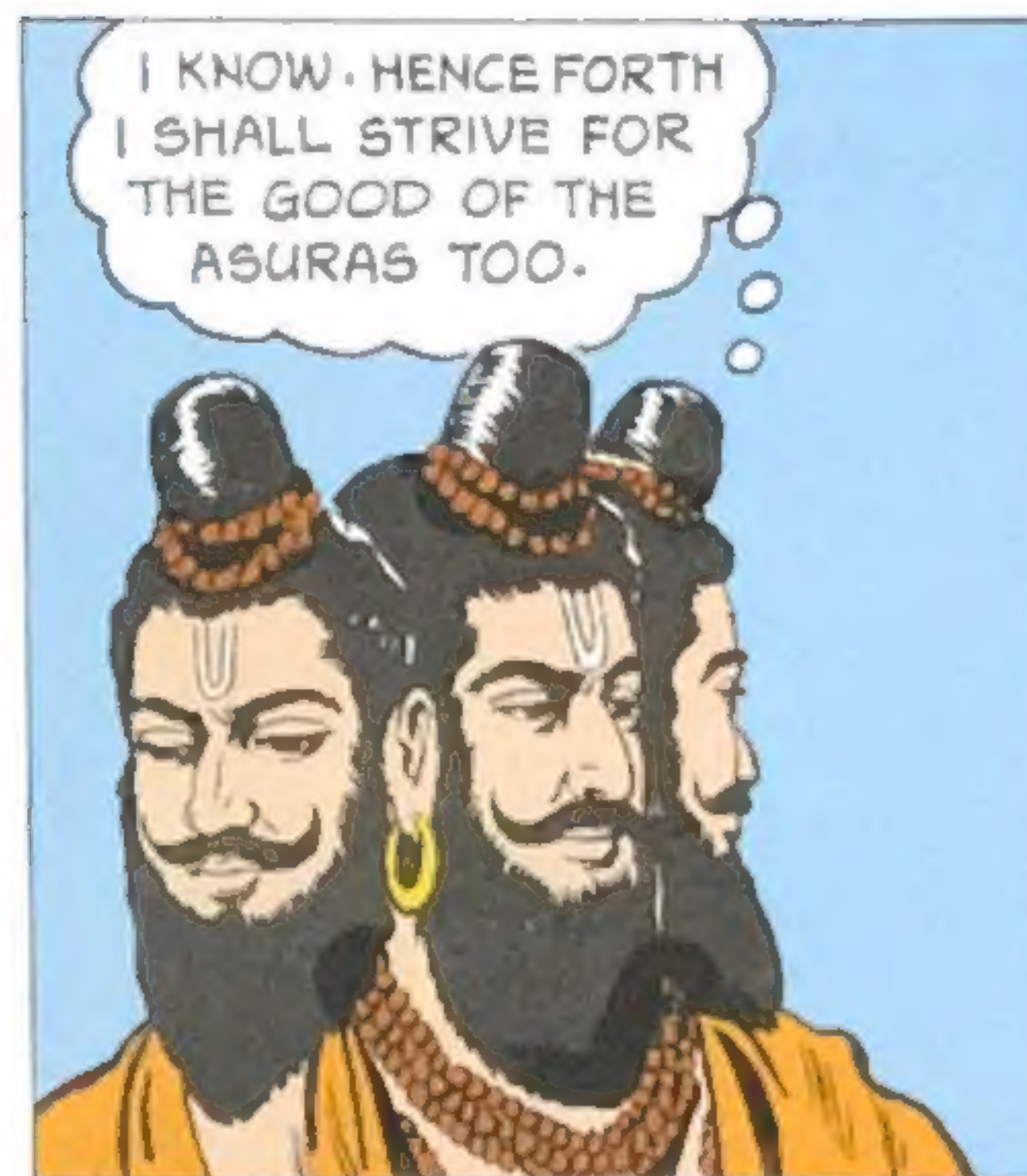
I AM GLAD.



AND YET...THE ASURAS ARE MY MOTHER'S RELATIVES. WHAT SHOULD I DO ?



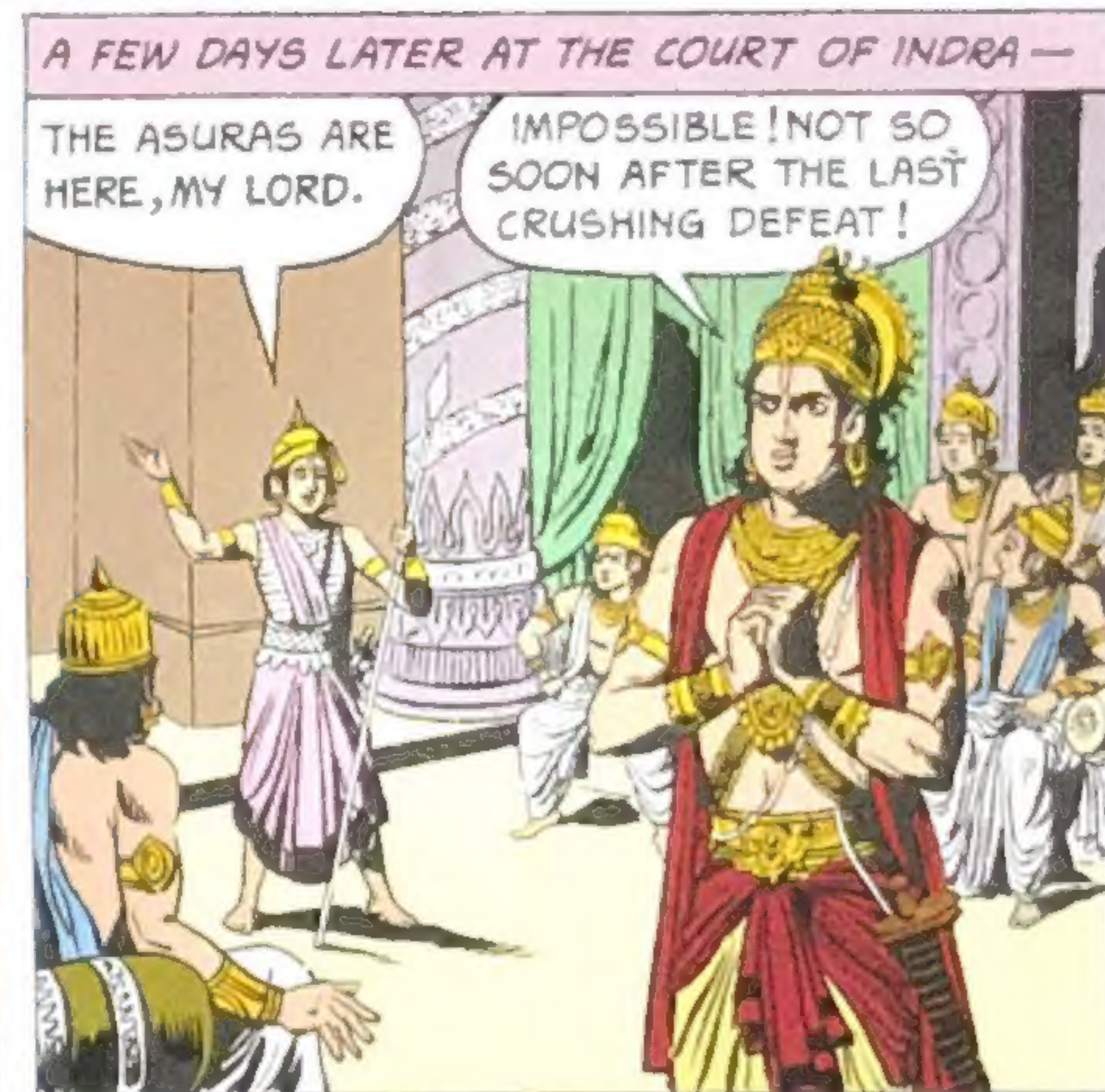
I KNOW. HENCE FORTH I SHALL STRIVE FOR THE GOOD OF THE ASURAS TOO.



A FEW DAYS LATER AT THE COURT OF INDRA —

THE ASURAS ARE HERE, MY LORD.

IMPOSSIBLE! NOT SO SOON AFTER THE LAST CRUSHING DEFEAT!



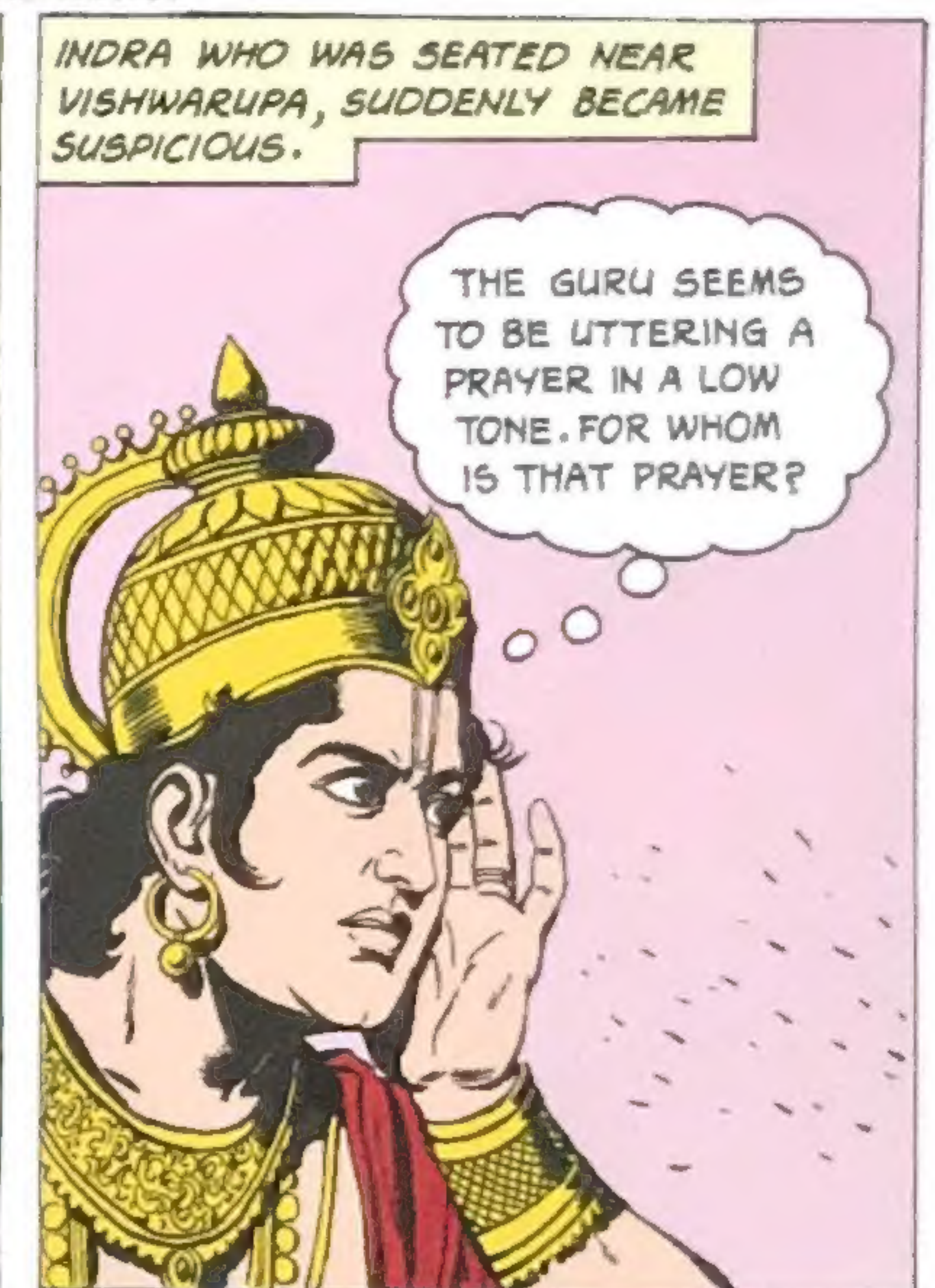
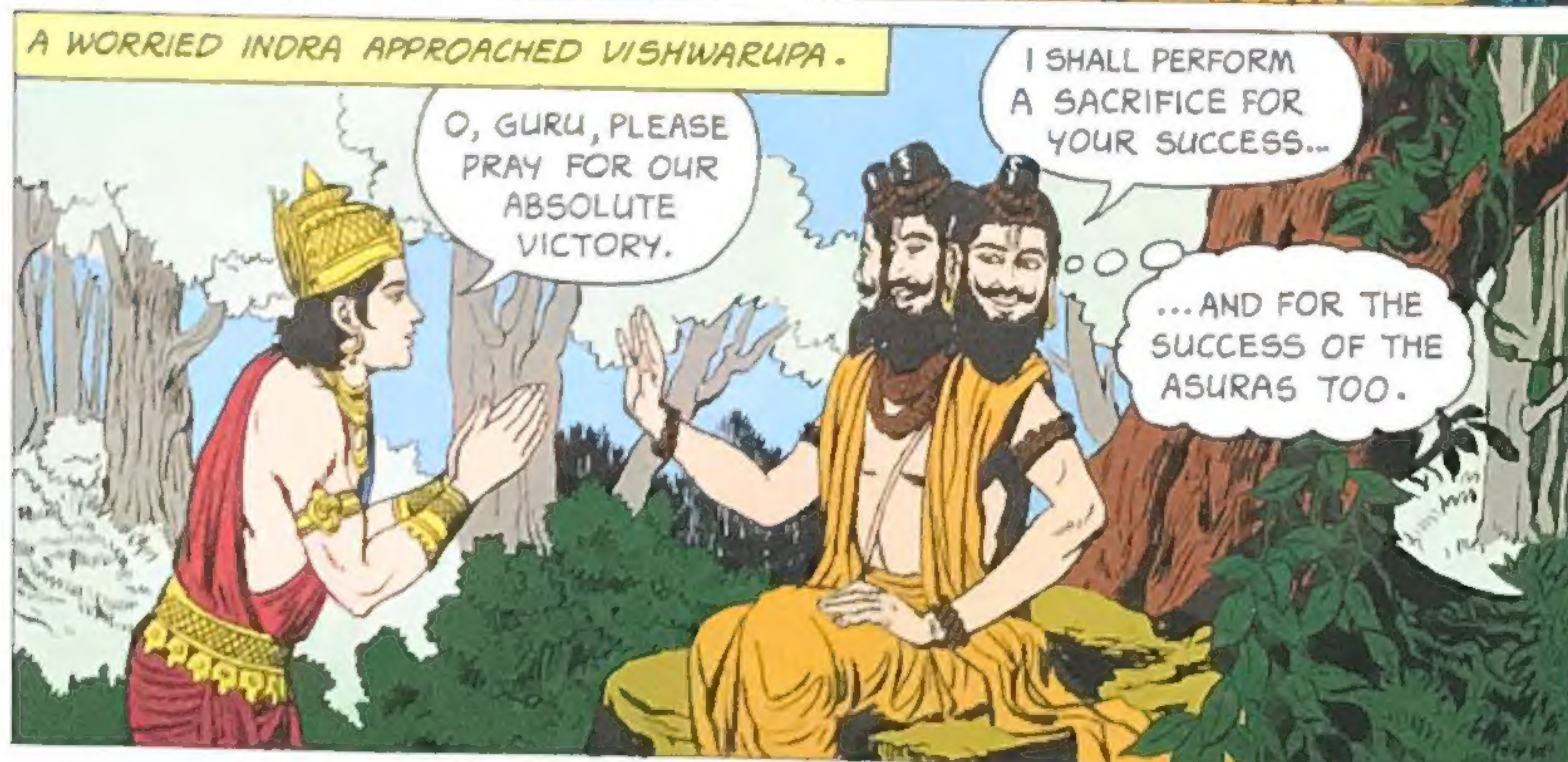
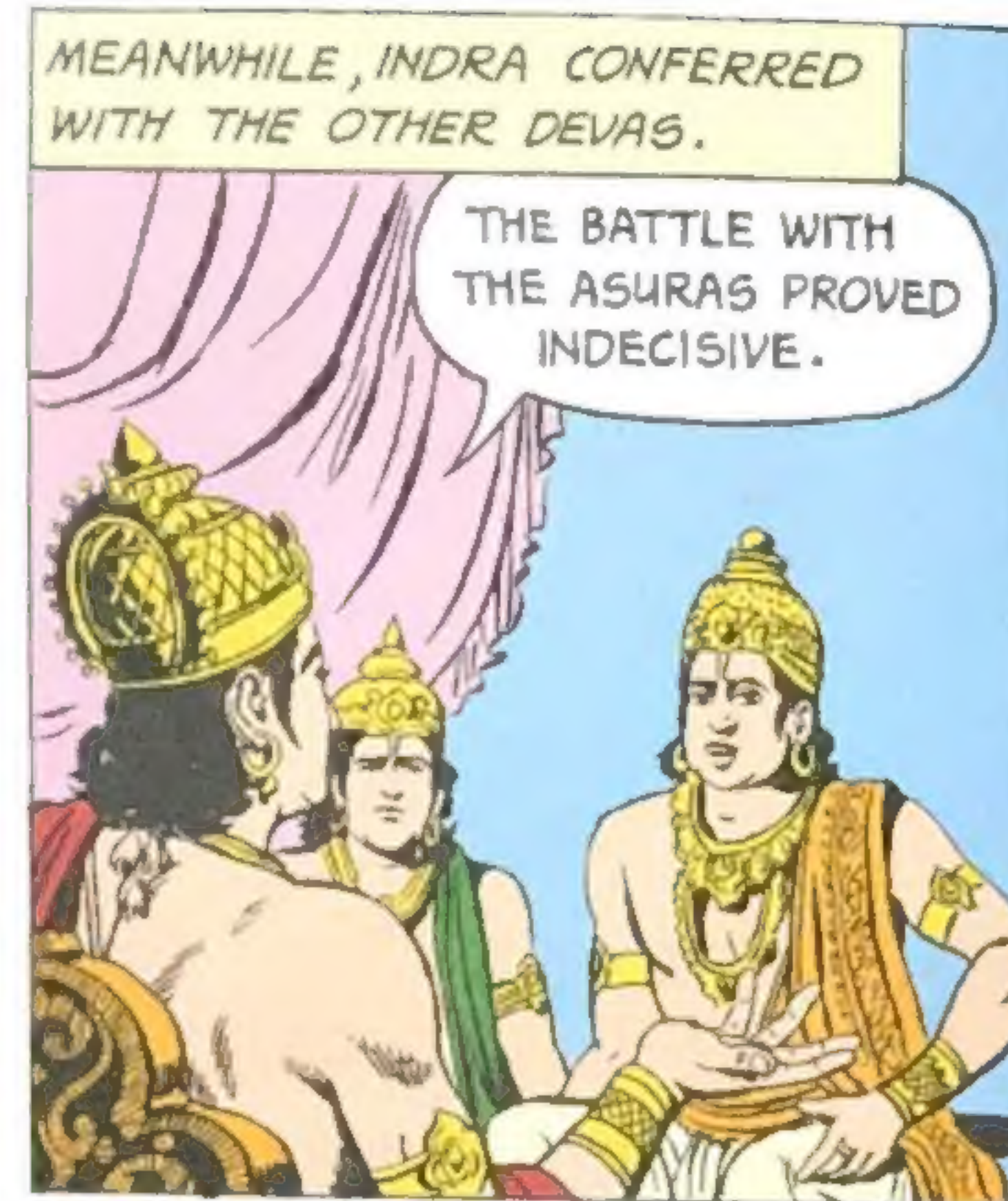
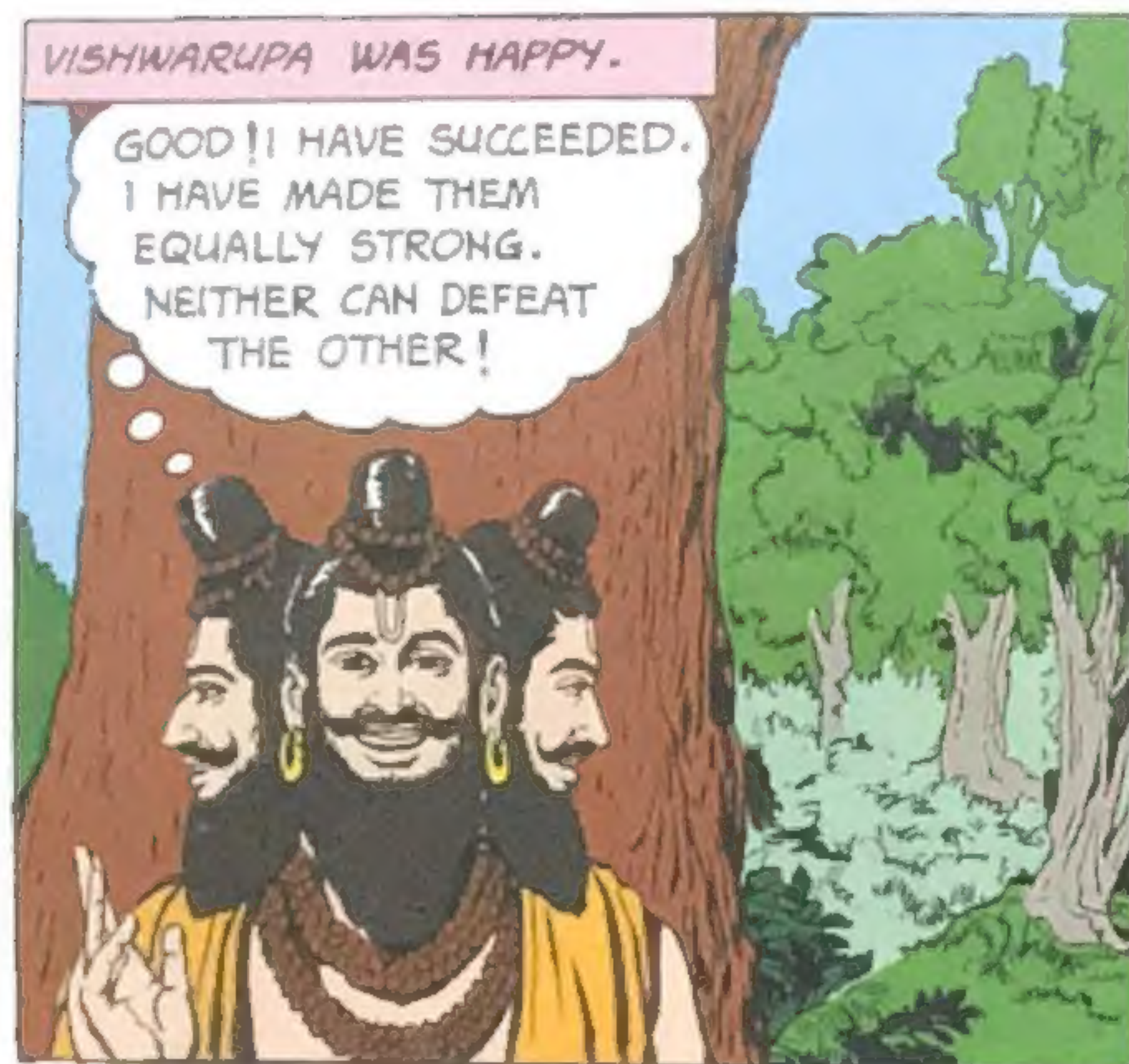
IN THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED...

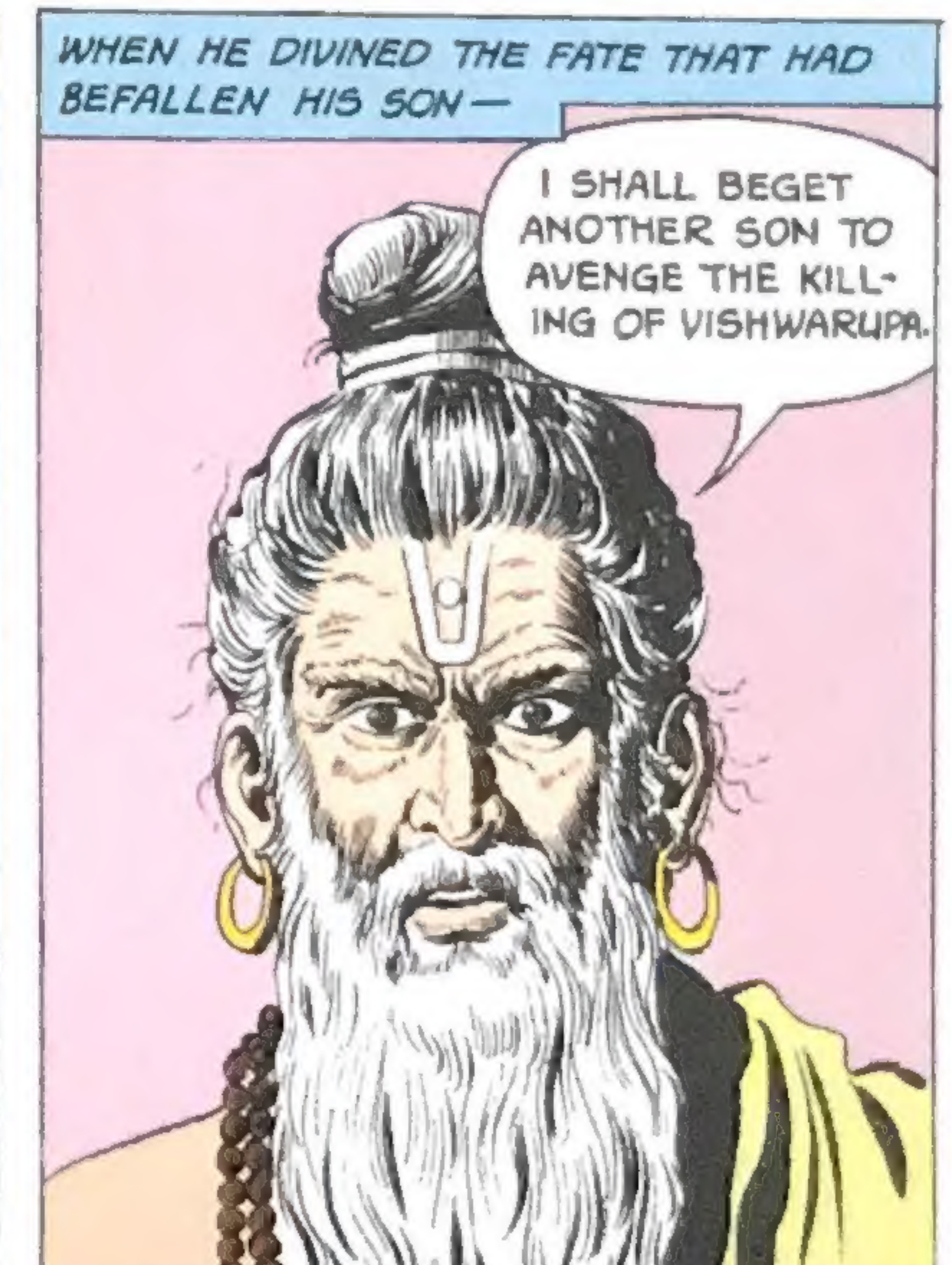
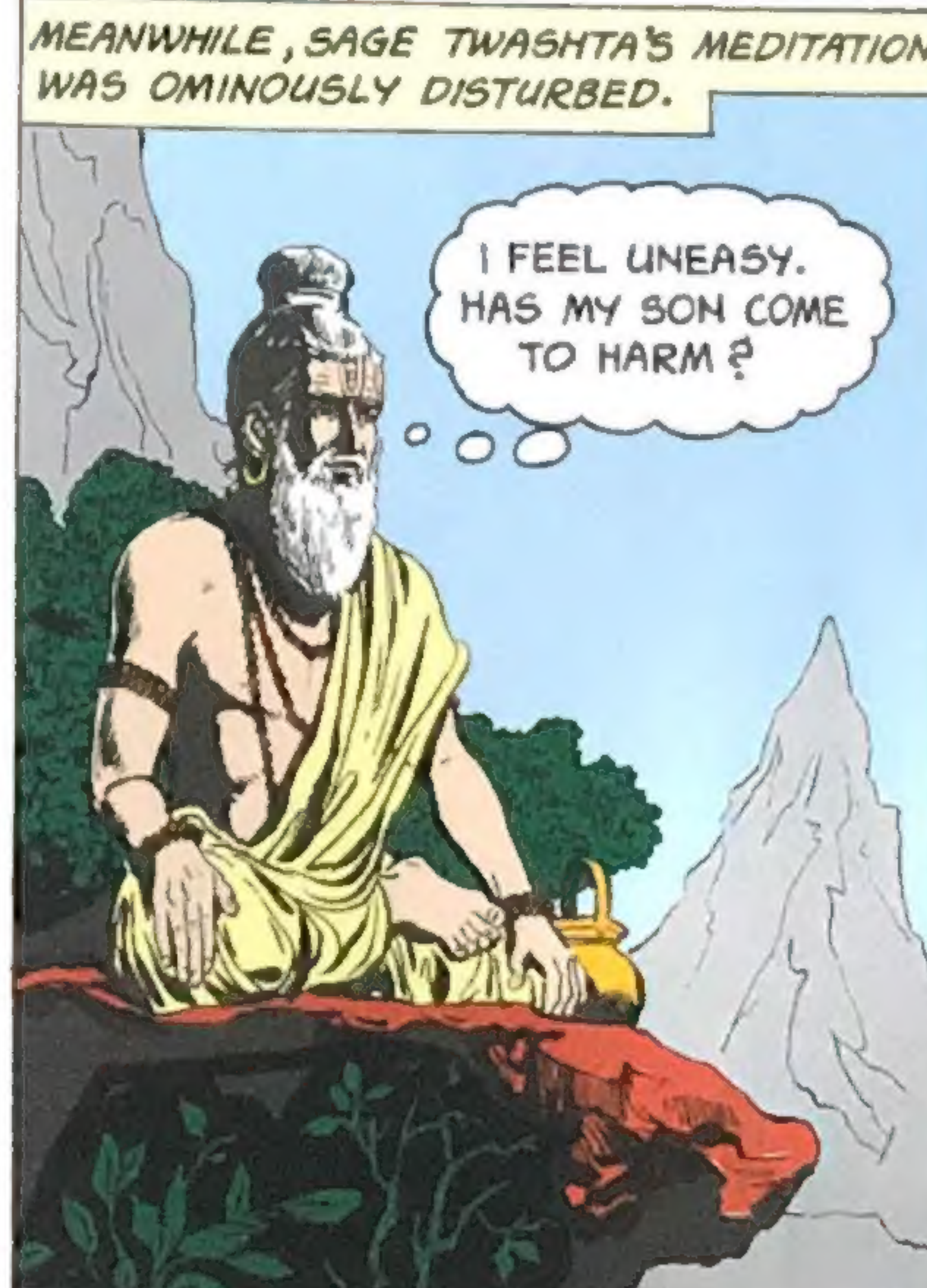
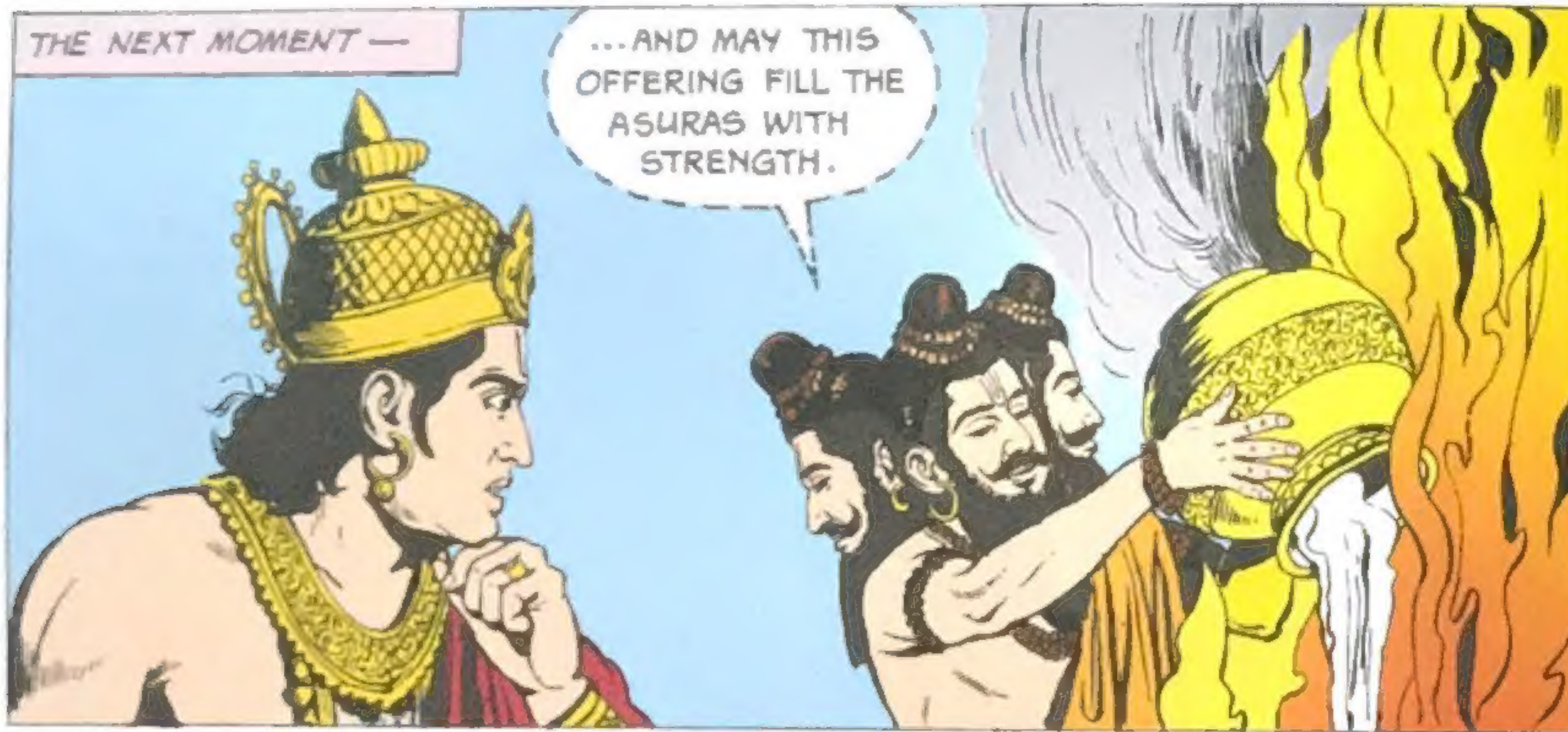


...THE DEVAS REPELLED THE ATTACK BUT WITH MUCH DIFFICULTY.

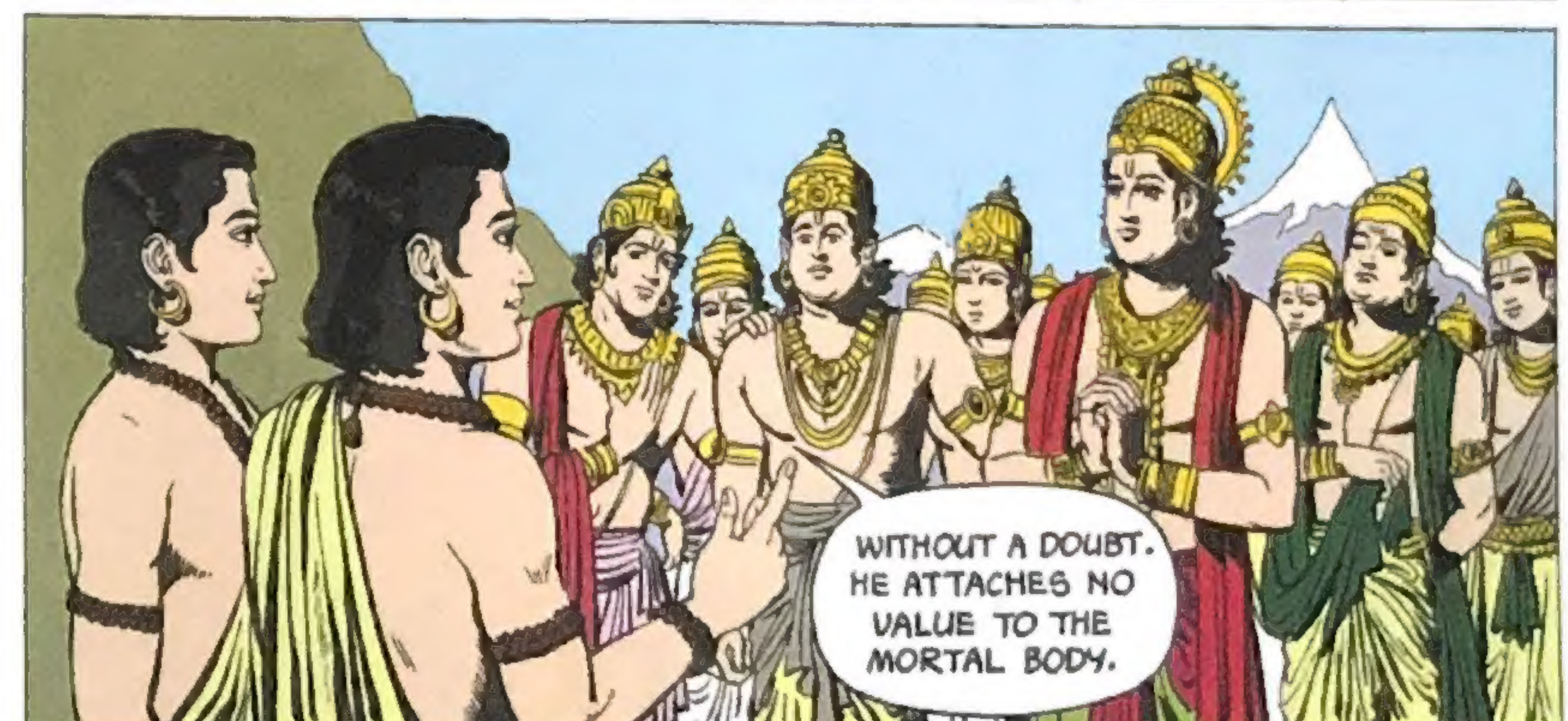
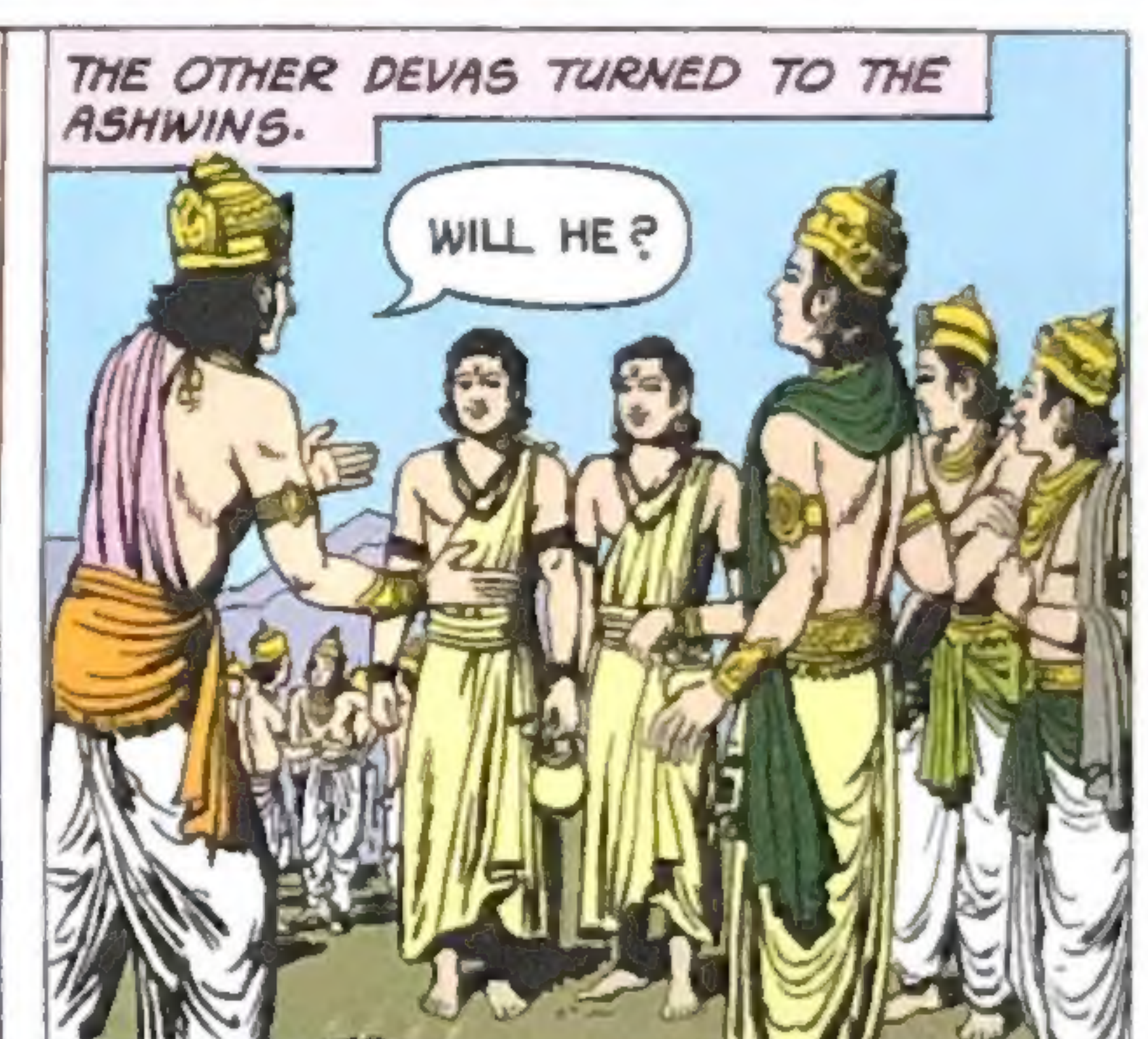
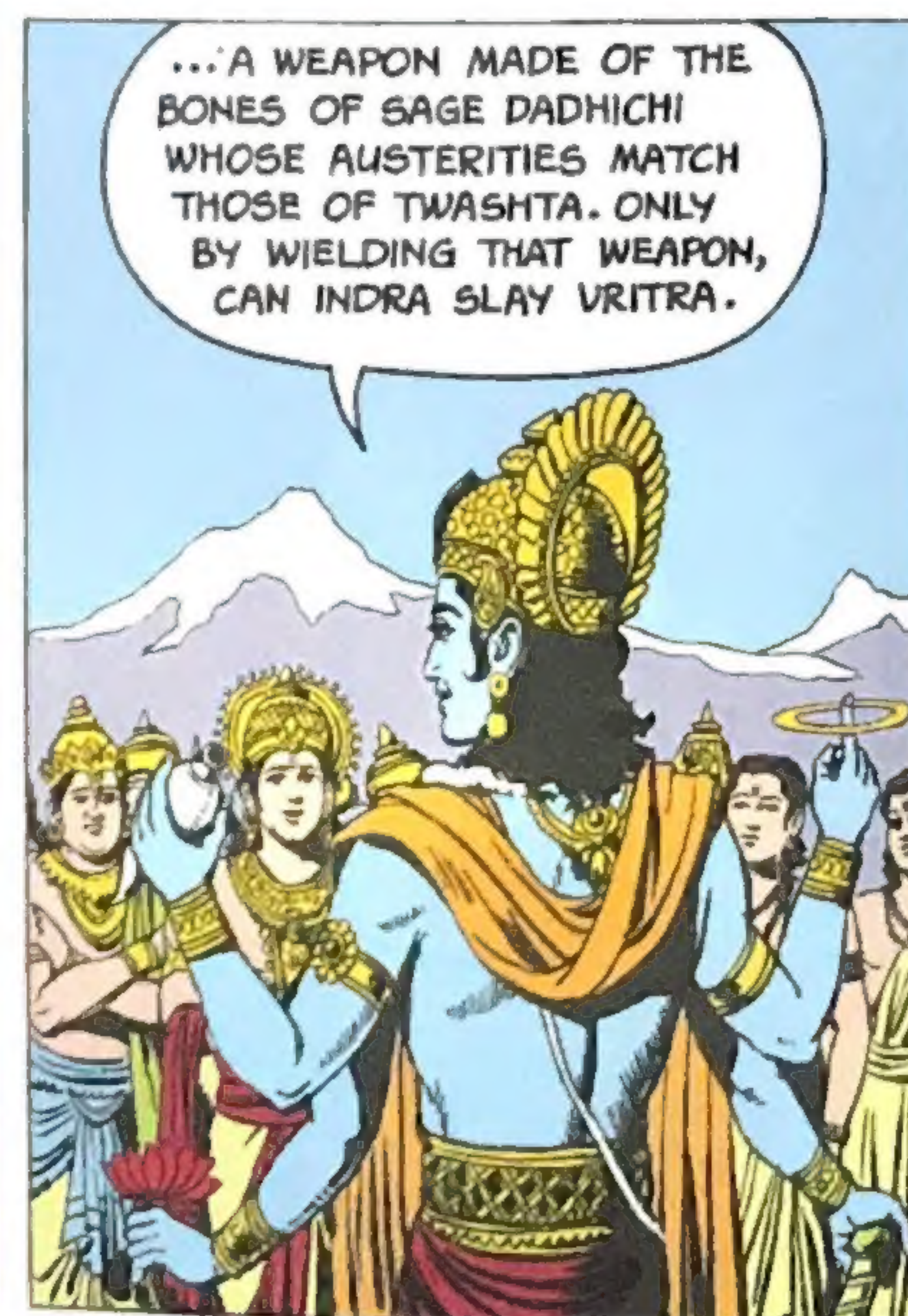
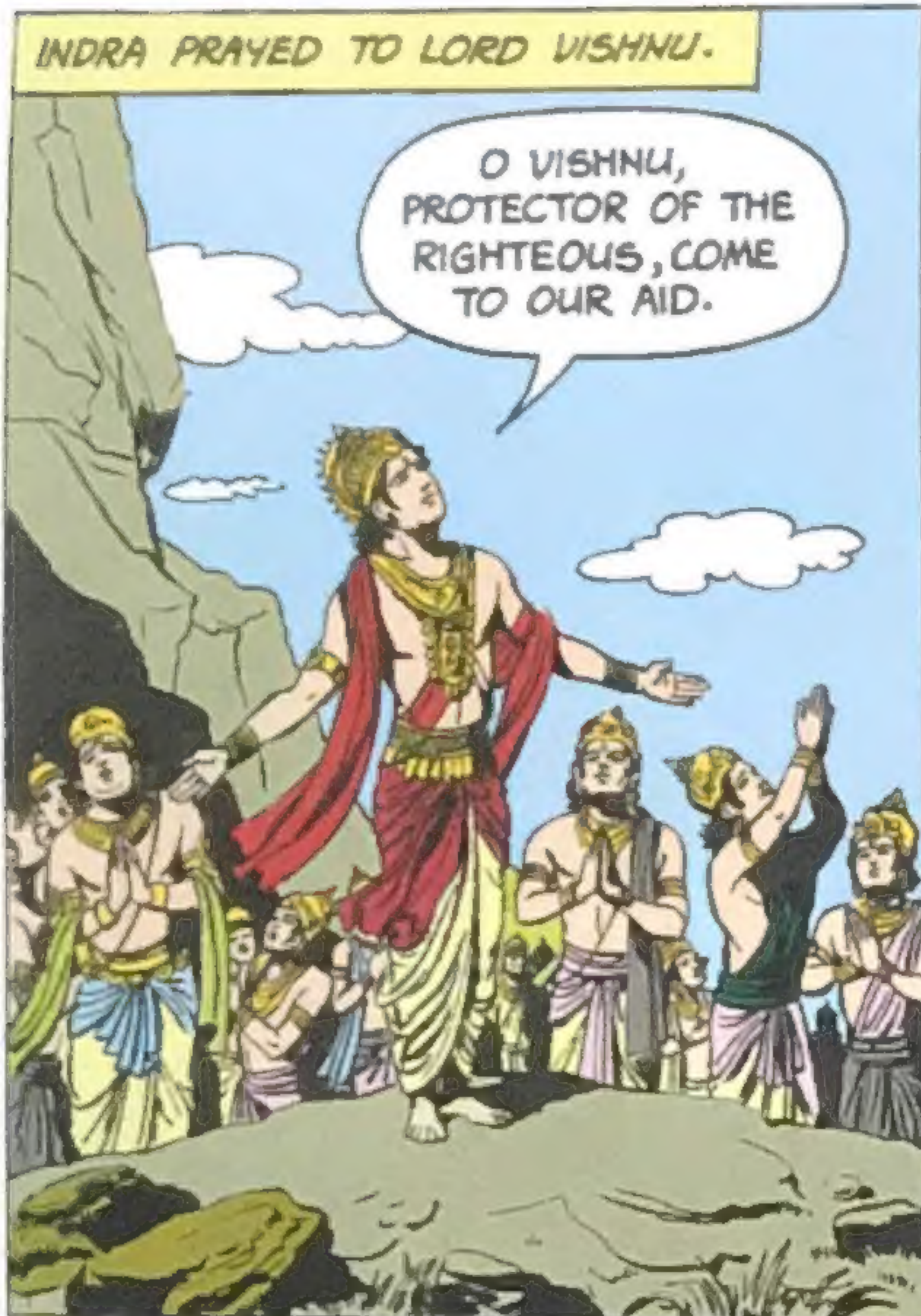
WE'LL BE BACK, YET.

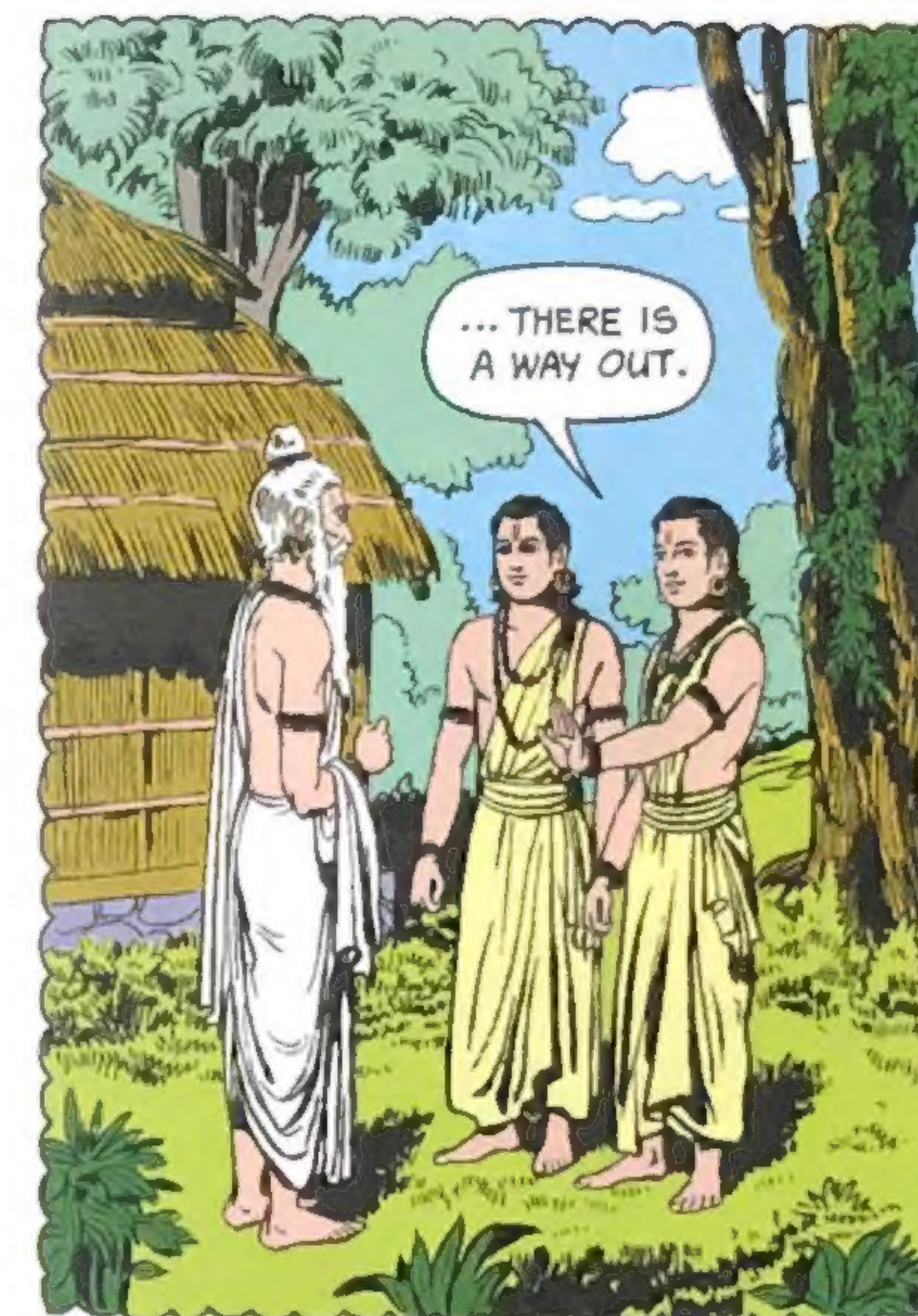
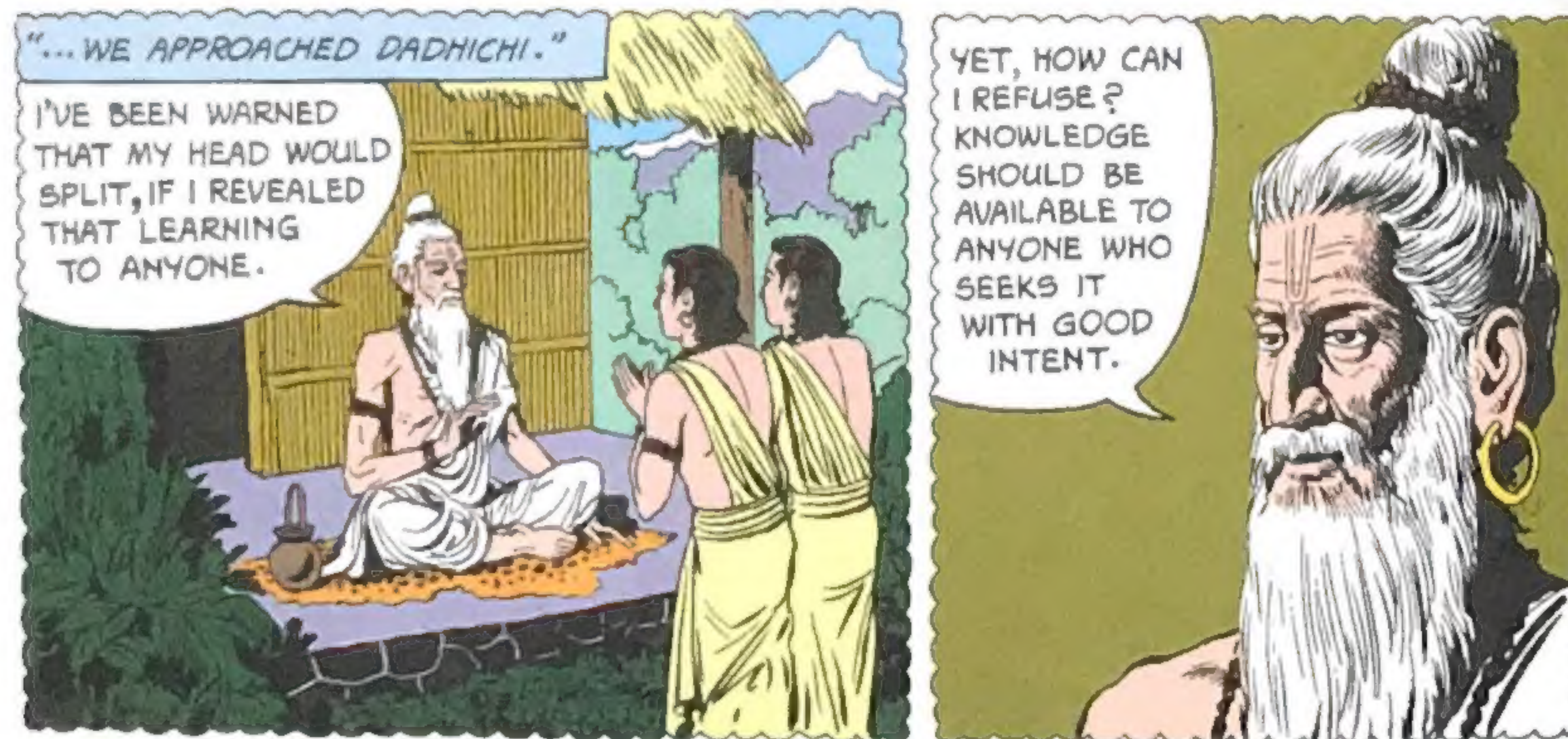
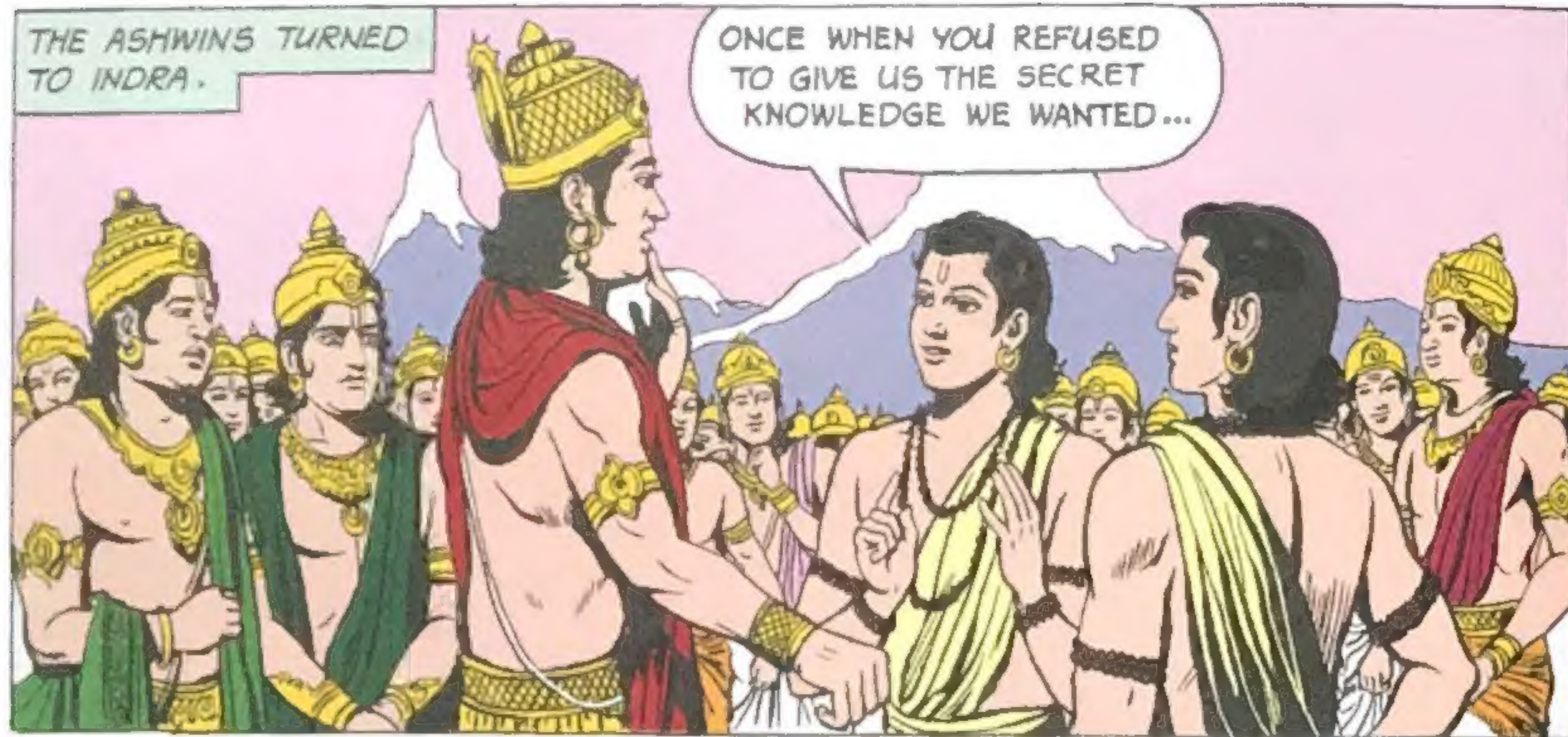












"THE MOMENT HE FINISHED, HIS NEW HEAD SPLIT UP INTO PIECES."



"WITHIN SECONDS WE REPLACED HIS OWN HEAD."



MAY YOUR KNOWLEDGE BE EVER FOR THE GOOD OF THE UNIVERSE.

WHEN THE ASHWINS CONCLUDED THEIR TALE —



I AM CONVINCED THAT DADHICHI WOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE TO HELP THE RIGHTEOUS.

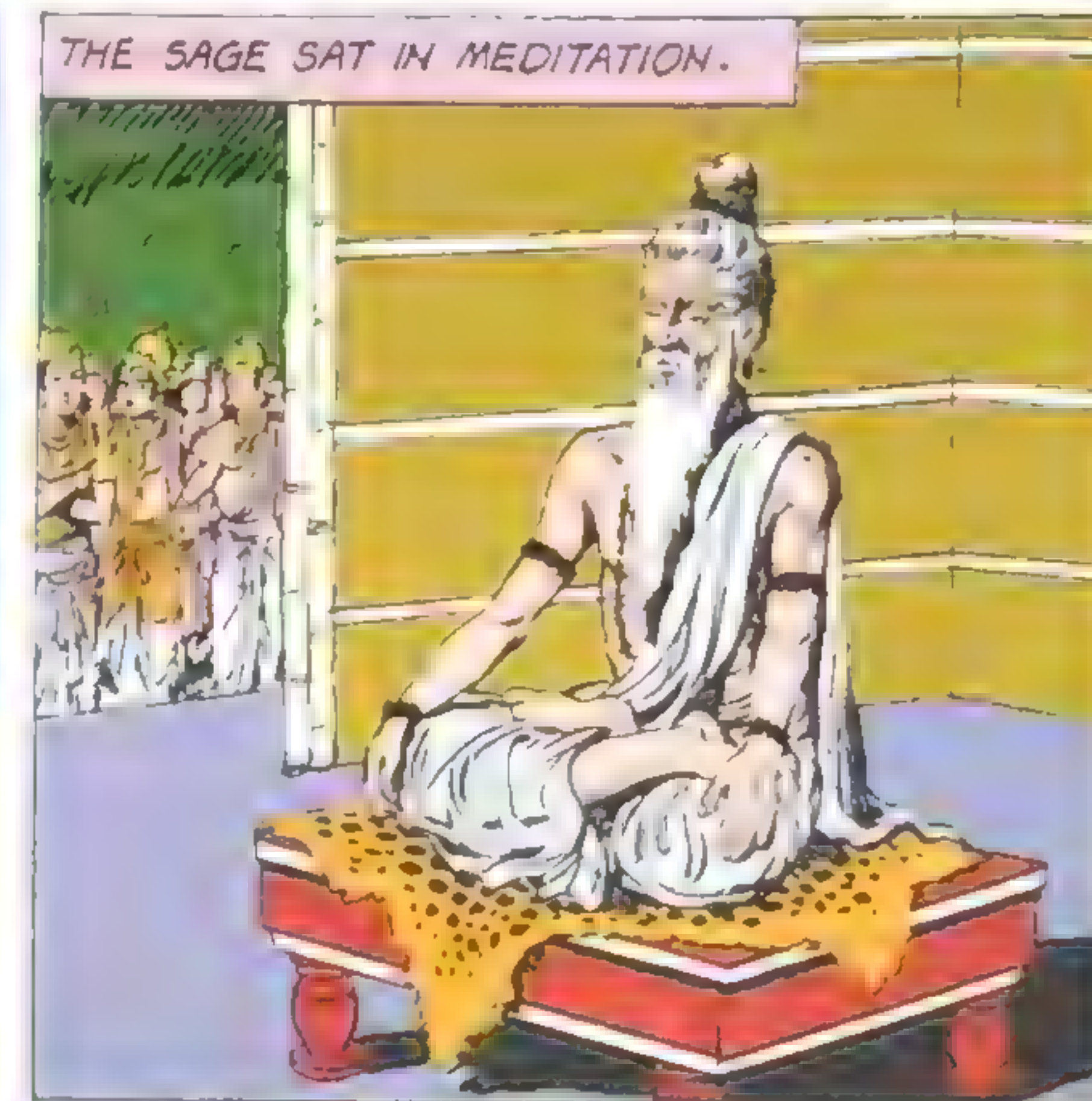
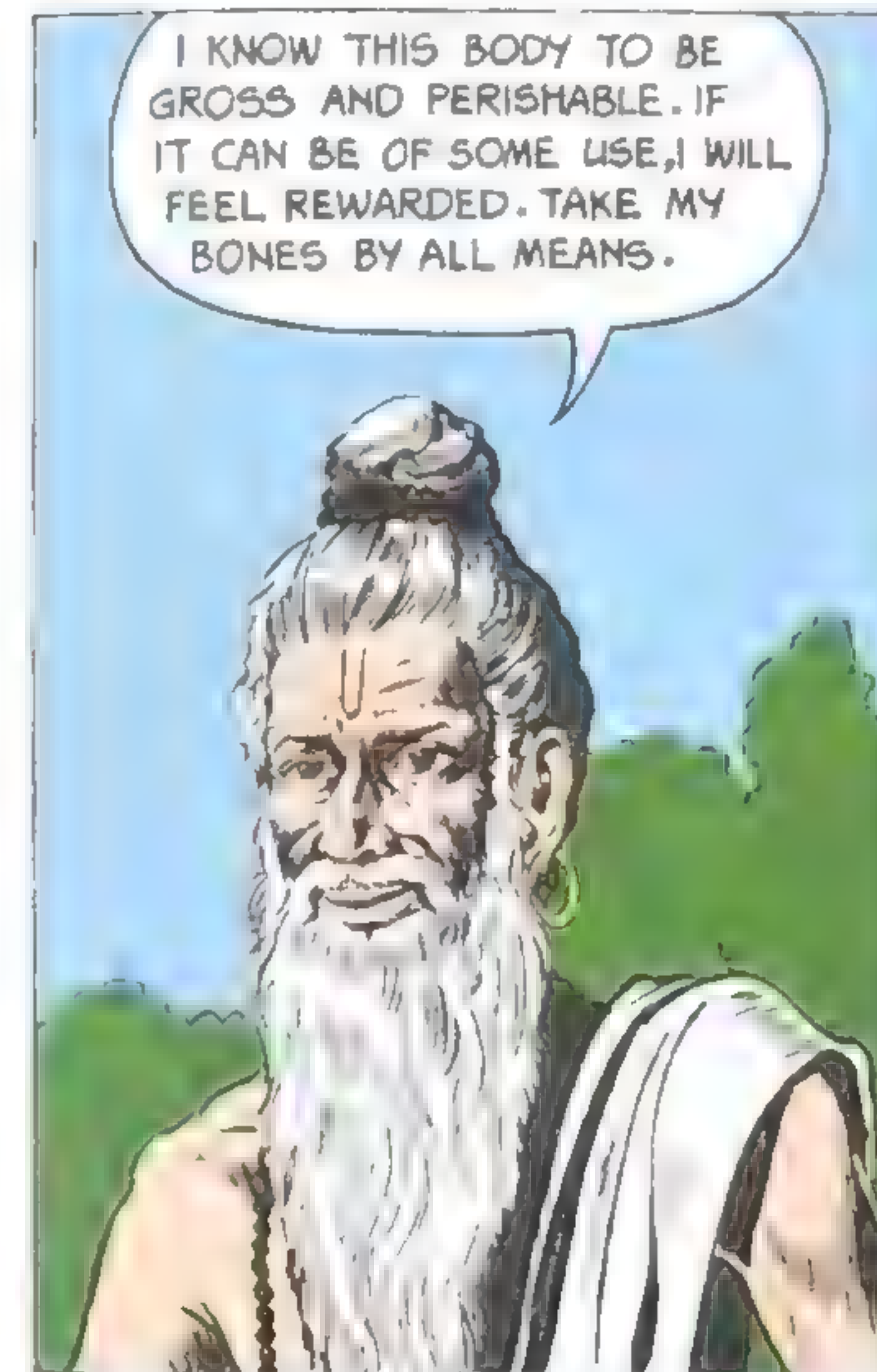
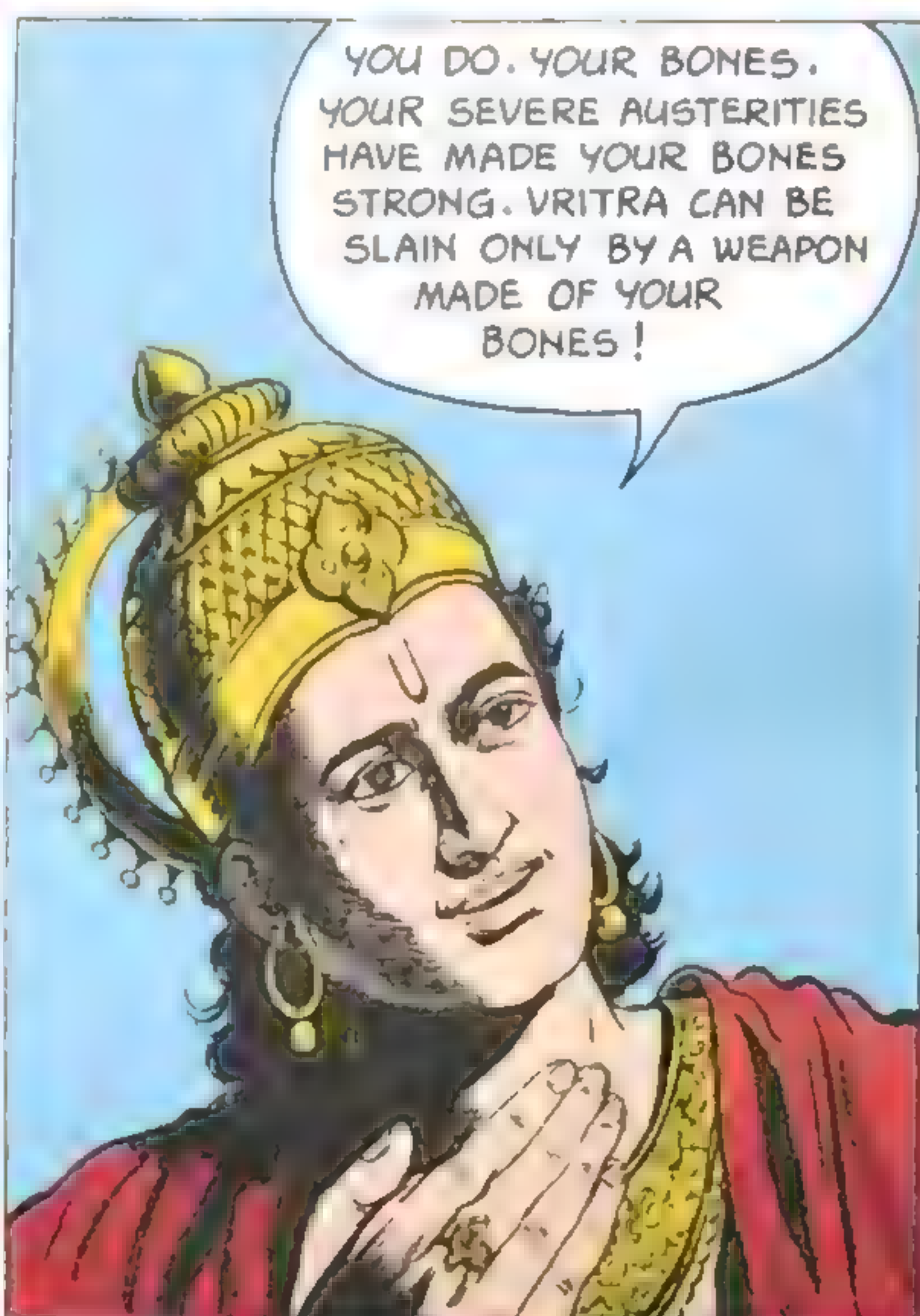
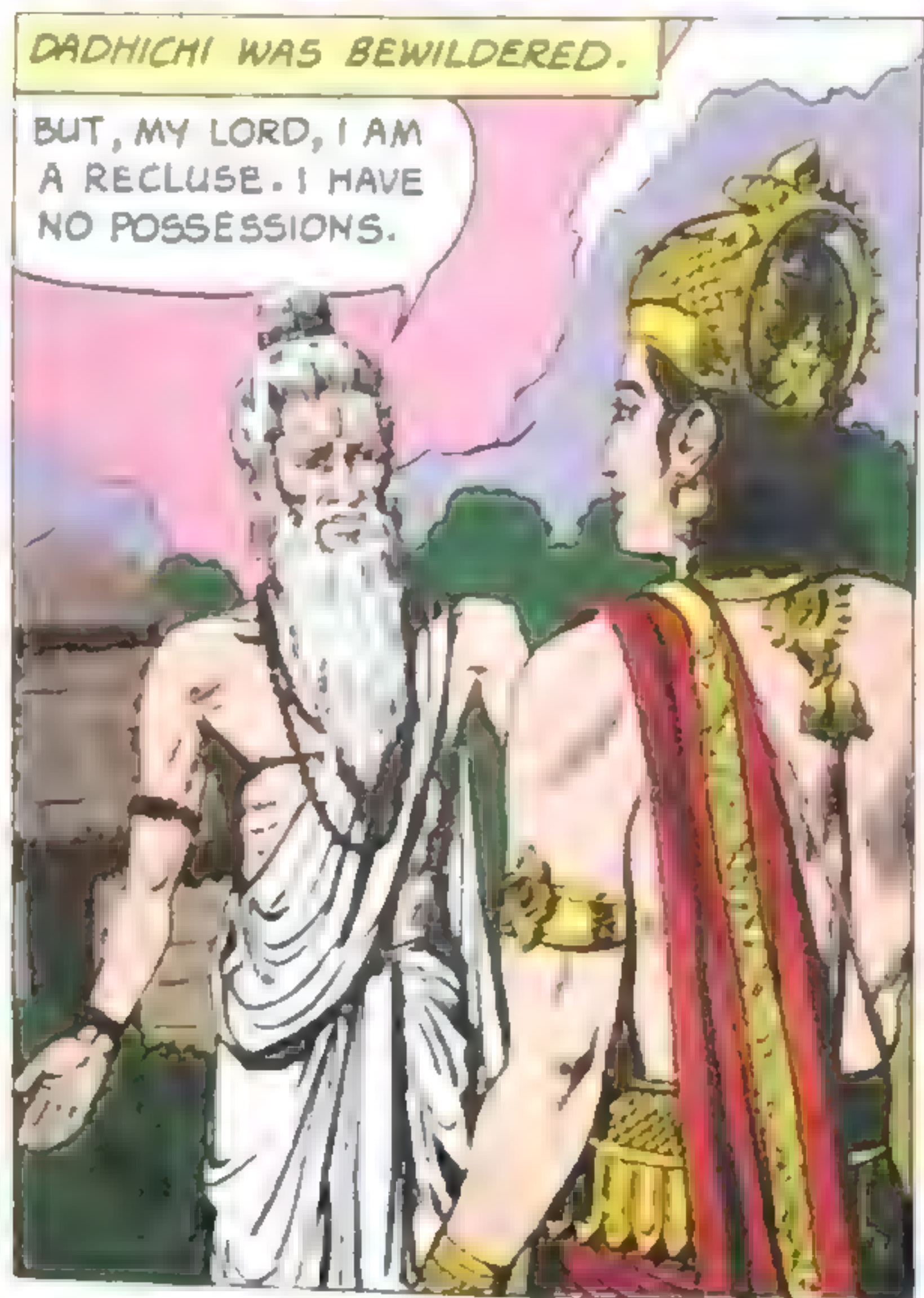
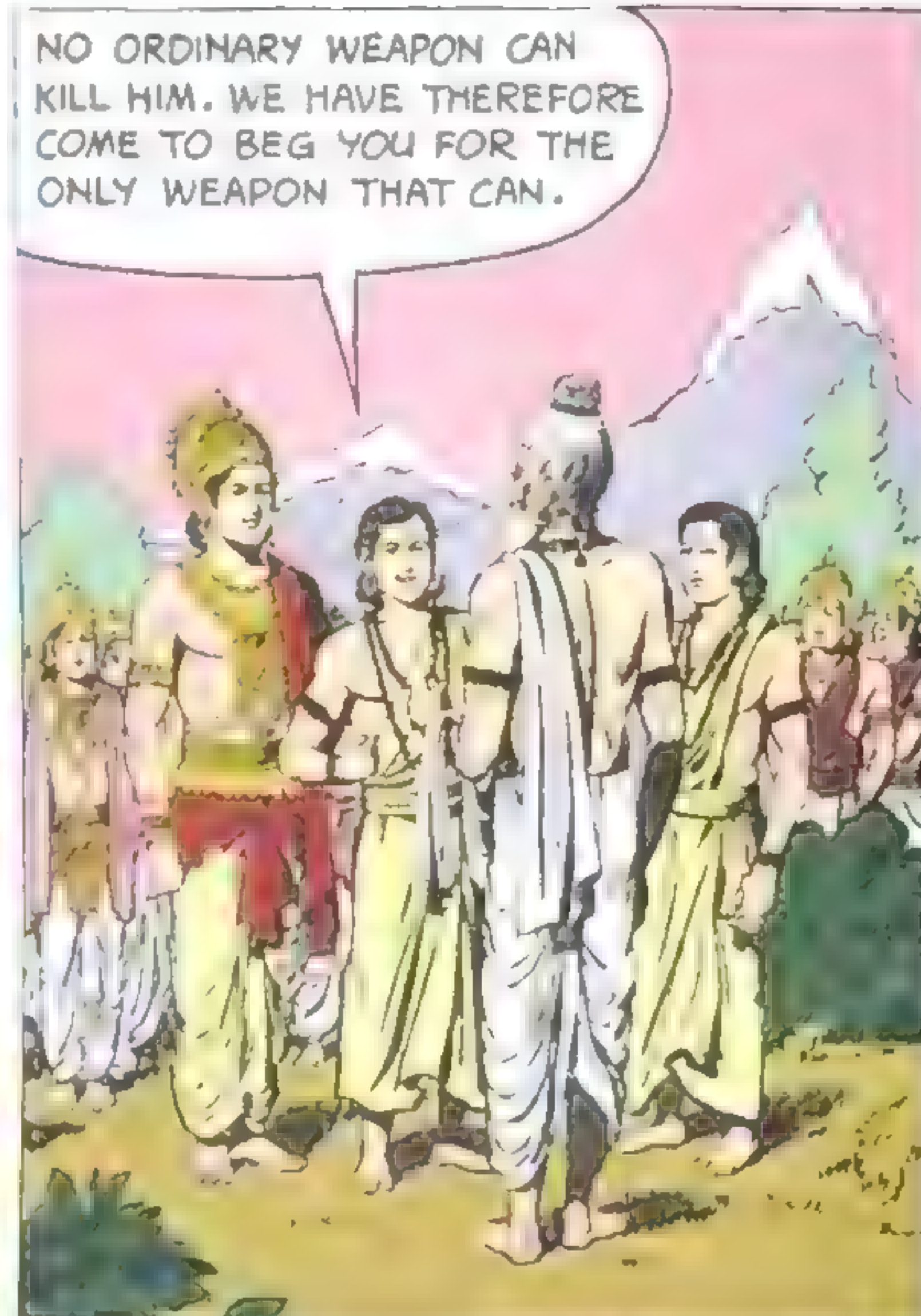
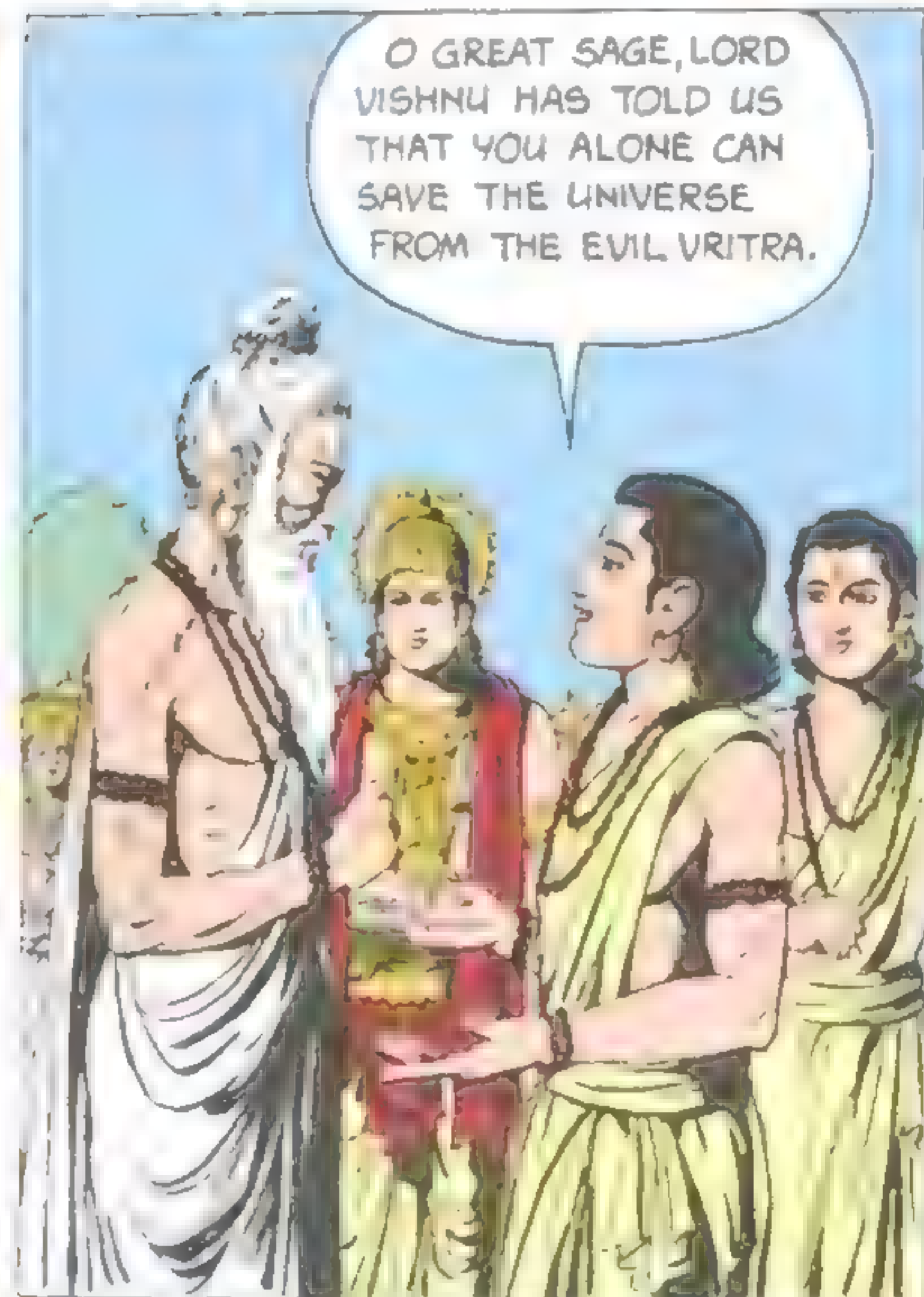
THE DEVAS SET OUT FOR THE HERMITAGE OF DADHICHI.



AT HIS HERMITAGE —



I AM HONOURED BY YOUR VISIT, O DEVAS! TELL ME HOW I CAN SERVE YOU.



HIS SOUL MERGED WITH LORD VISHNU, LEAVING BEHIND HIS LIFELESS BODY.



THEN VISHWAKARMA, THE CELESTIAL ARCHITECT TOOK HIS BONES AND BEGAN MAKING A WEAPON.



LORD, HERE IS THE DEADLIEST OF WEAPONS, VAJRA, THE THUNDERBOLT. TAKE IT AND FIGHT VRITRA.

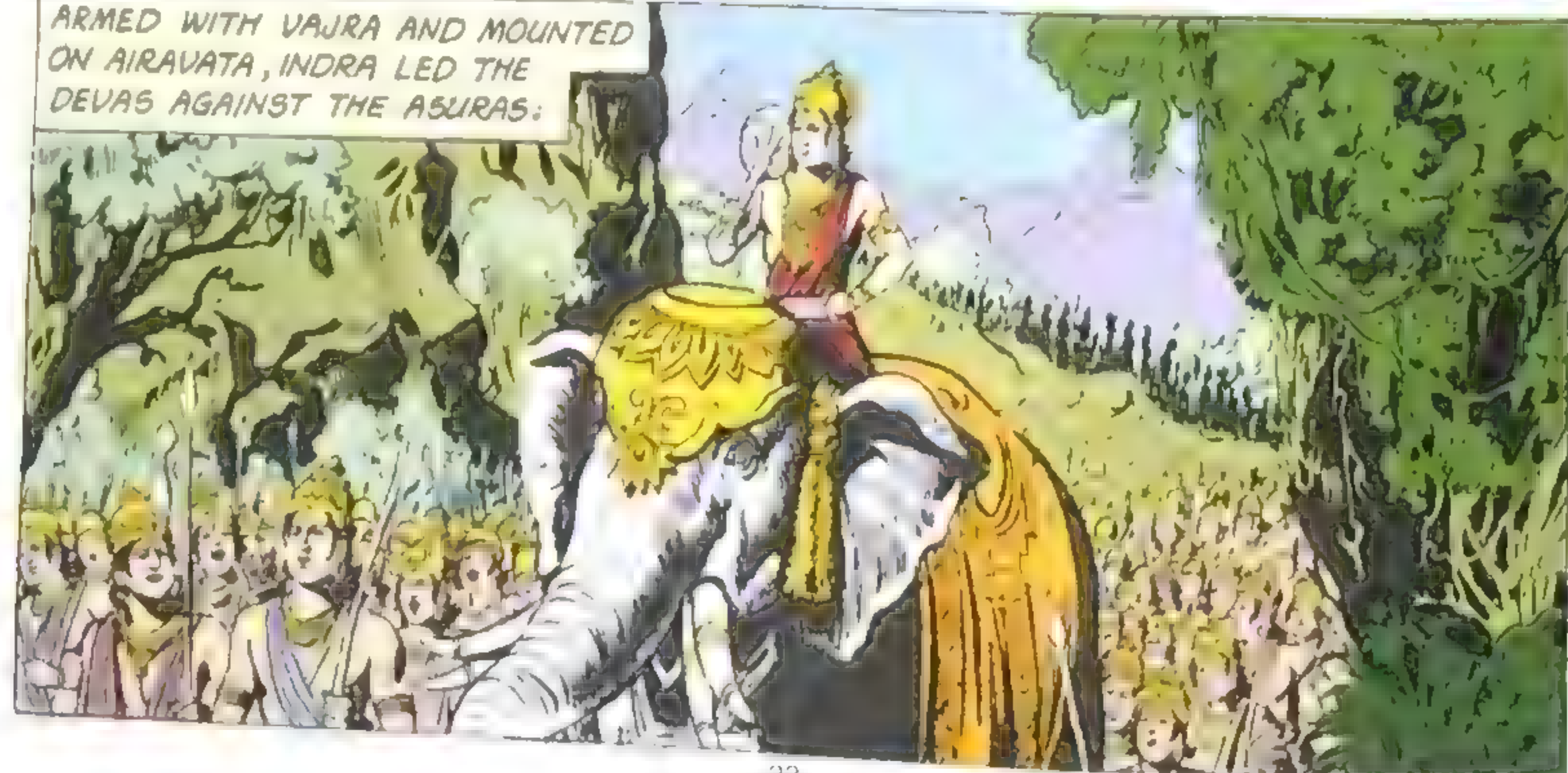


AS SOON AS INDRA ACCEPTED THE WEAPON—

I FEEL A NEW VITALITY SURGING THROUGH MY VEINS.



ARMED WITH VAJRA AND MOUNTED ON AIRAVATA, INDRA LED THE DEVAS AGAINST THE ASURAS.



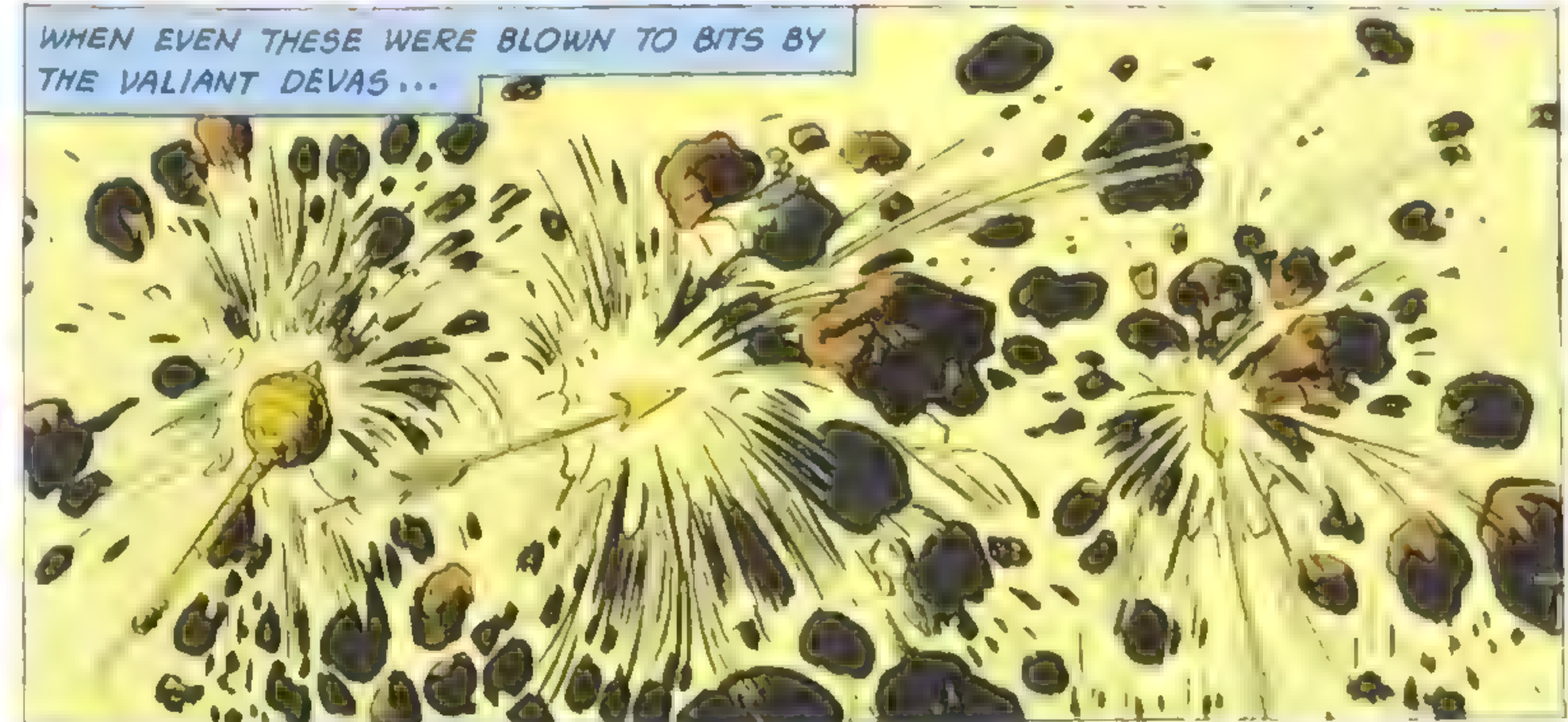
FERCE WAS THE BATTLE THAT WAS FOUGHT ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER NARMADA.



THE ASURAS, WHOSE WEAPONS WERE SOON EXHAUSTED, BEGAN TO HURL MOUNTAIN PEAKS AT THE DEVAS.



WHEN EVEN THESE WERE BLOWN TO BITS BY THE VALIANT DEVAS...





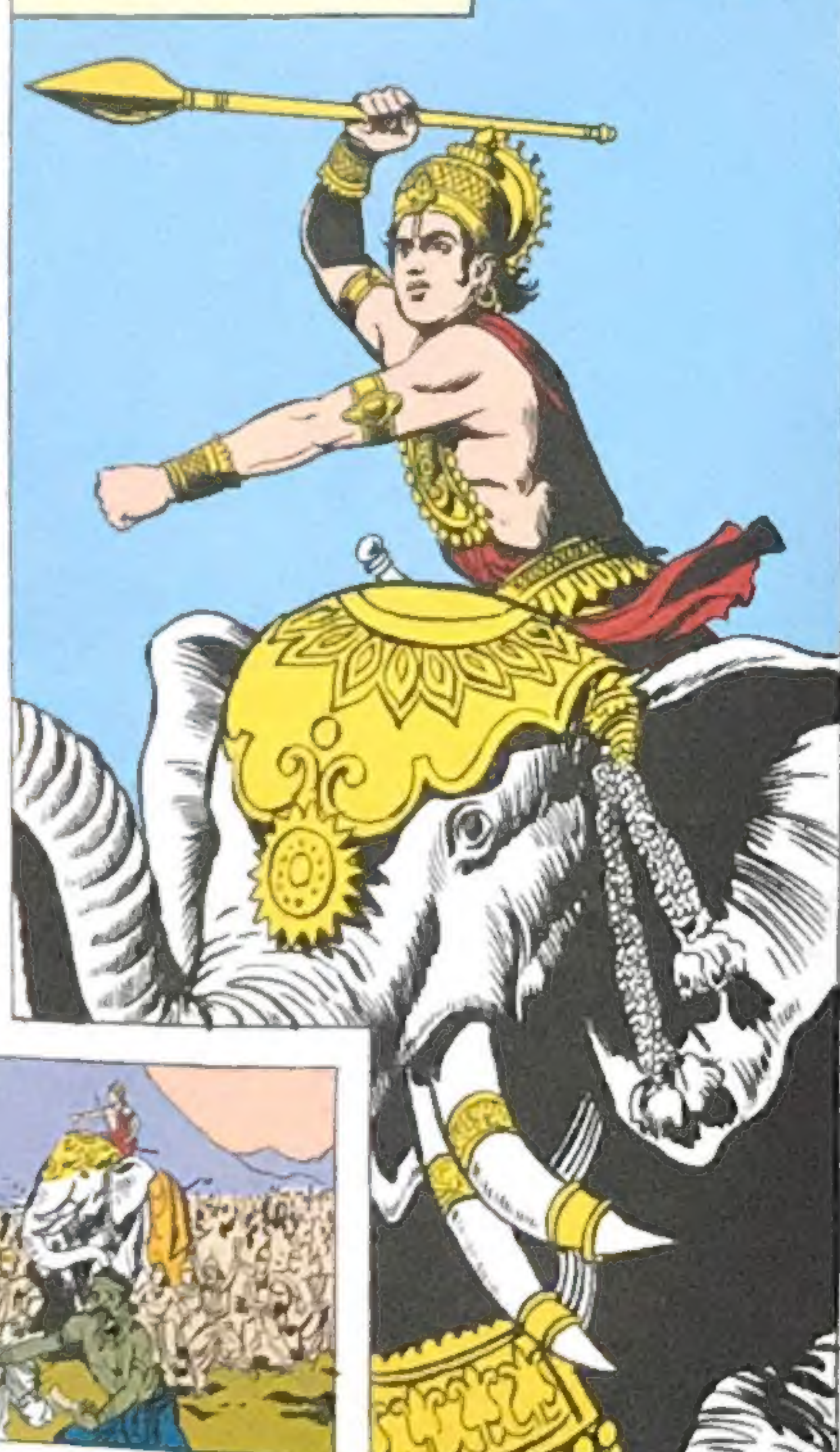
... THE ASURAS TOOK TO THEIR HEELS WITH THE DEVAS IN HOT PURSUIT.

THEN VRITRA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.

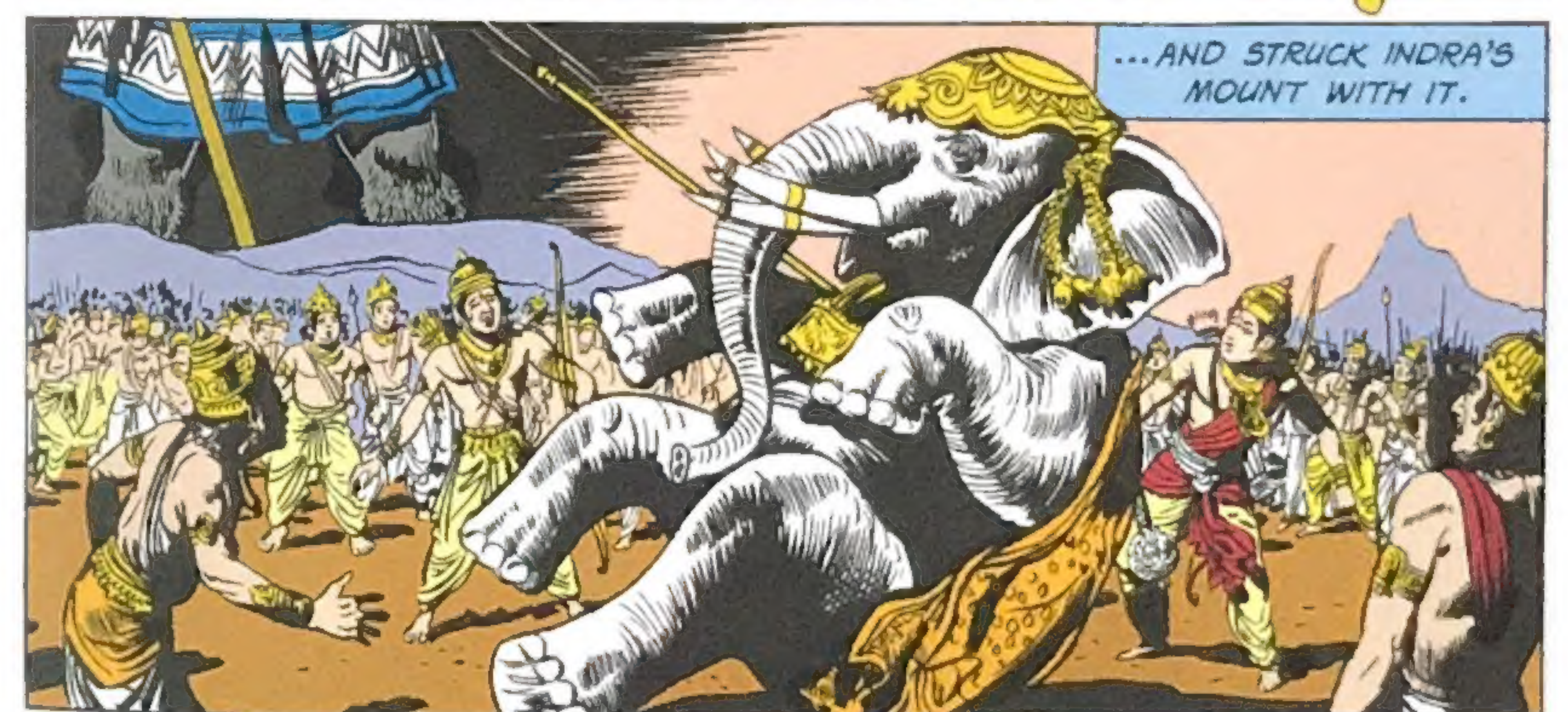


WHY DO YOU RUN AFTER COWARDS? TO KILL FUGITIVE WARRIORS IS NOT WORTHY OF HEROES. I'LL GIVE YOU BATTLE, IF YOU SO DESIRE. COME ON!

SEETHING WITH ANGER, INDRA HURLED A WEAPON AT VRITRA.



VRITRA CAUGHT IT WITH HIS LEFT HAND...



...AND STRUCK INDRA'S MOUNT WITH IT.



INDRA'S MOUNT, AIRAVATA, BEGAN TO RUN AMUCK ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

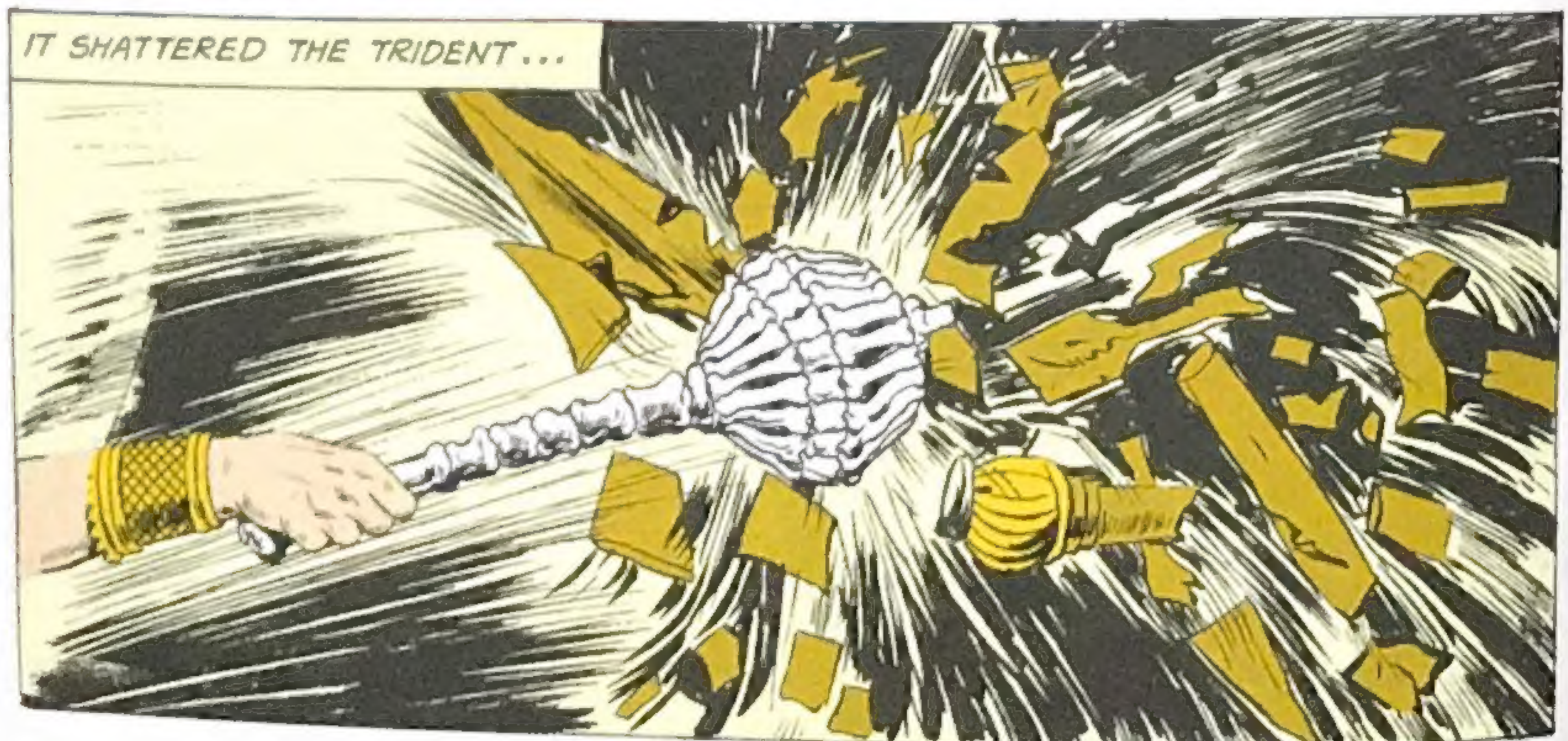
SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY, VRITRA AIMED HIS TERRIBLE TRIDENT AT INDRA.



AS THE TRIDENT CAME FLYING AT HIM, INDRA RAISED HIS VAJRA.



IT SHATTERED THE TRIDENT...



... AND SEVERED ONE OF VRITRA'S ARMS.



ENRAGED, VRITRA FELL UPON INDRA AND STRUCK HIM WITH A MASSIVE BLUDGEON.



THE VAJRA FLEW OFF INDRA'S HANDS AND FELL TO THE GROUND.



I'VE LOST MY WEAPON. HOW CAN I CONTINUE THE FIGHT?





I LOSE AN ARM
AND I STILL
FIGHT. YOU MISS
A MERE WEAPON
AND WOULD
FLEE ?



OUR COMBAT IS LIKE A GAME
OF DICE. THE OUTCOME IS
NOT KNOWN TO US. FIGHT,
INDRA, FIGHT !



PICKING UP THE VAJRA, INDRA SMILED
AT VRITRA.

O VRITRA, IT IS
A PLEASURE TO FIGHT
WITH ONE AS VALOR-
OUS AS YOU.
HERE COMES MY
VAJRA !



AS INDRA'S VAJRA
STRUCK —



THE DEVAS WERE JUBILANT.

VRITRA IS
FINISHED !

WITHOUT HIS
ARMS, HE IS AS
GOOD AS DEAD !



VRITRA ROARED WITH ANGER.

IF I AM AS
GOOD AS DEAD,
SO SHALL
INDRA BE !



THEN THE MIGHTY ASURA OPENED
HIS MOUTH AND DREW A DEEP
BREATH.

AAAAAA

TO HIS SURPRISE, INDRA FOUND HIMSELF BEING DRAWN TOWARDS THE ASURA.



ALONG WITH AIRAVATA, HE FELL INTO THE MOUTH OF THE ASURA, WENT DOWN HIS GULLET ...



... AND HIT HIS ABDOMEN WITH A THUD.

VRITRA HAS INVITED DEATH UPON HIMSELF.



HE CUT OPEN VRITRA'S ABDOMEN WITH HIS VAJRA ...



... AND CAME OUT.



INDRA HURLED HIS VAJRA WITH ALL HIS MIGHT AT VRITRA ...



... AND THIS TIME THE VAJRA FOUND ITS MARK.

